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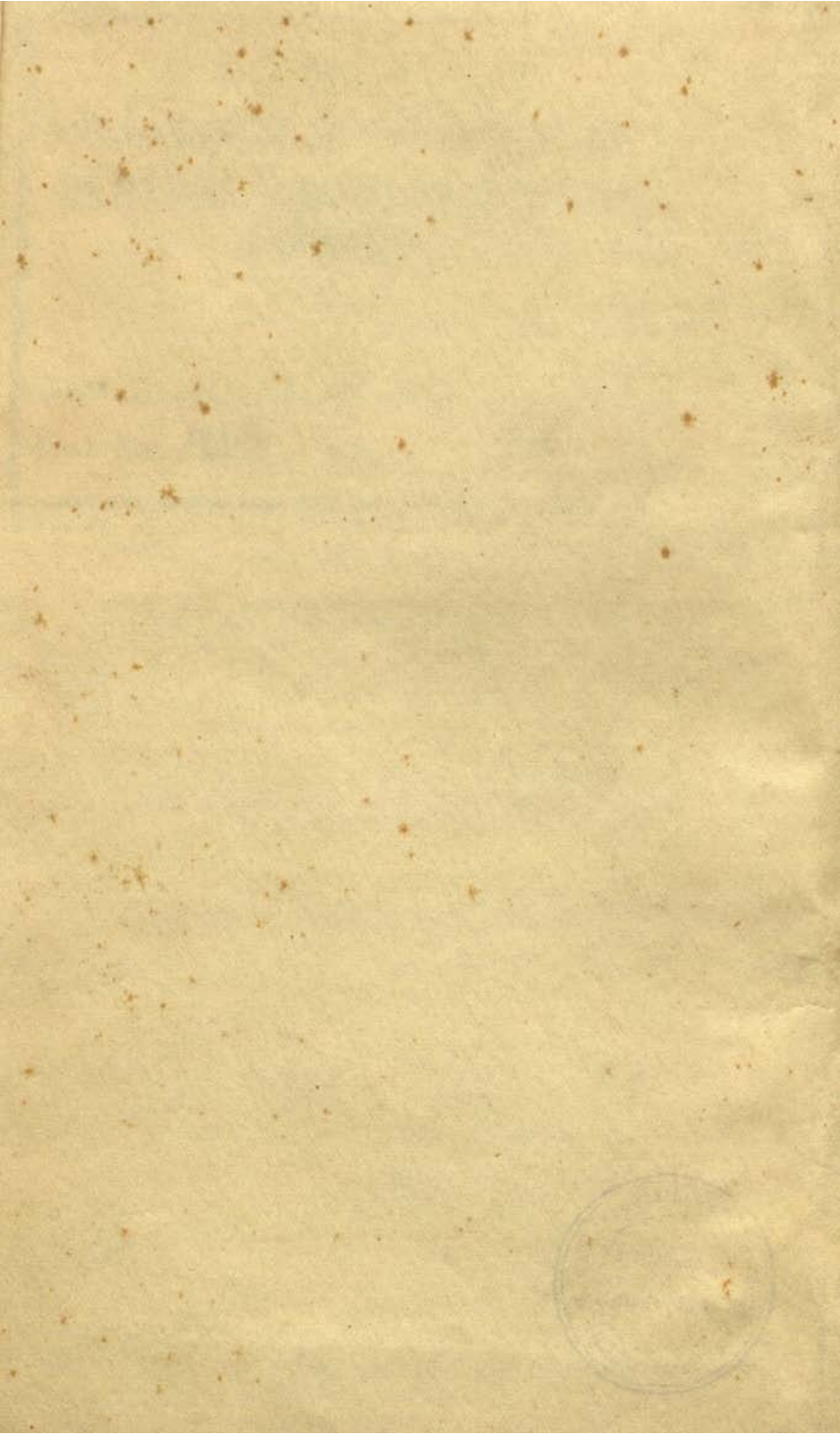
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DIALECTIC IN BUDDHISM  
AND VEDĀNTA



*By the Same Author :*

1. INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
2. BAÚDDHA DARSHANA AUR VEDĀNTA  
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# DIALECTIC IN BUDDHISM AND VEDĀNTA

( A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD. )

771

BY

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To

Professors

Anukul Chandra Mukerji

Naridas Bhattacharyya

and

Ramchandra Dattatreya Ranade

The Three Great Teachers of Philosophy

This Work is

Respectfully & Affectionately Dedicated



Professors

Faculty of Law, University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

and

Members of the University of Michigan

of the Law School of Michigan

and

Members of the University of Michigan

## PREFACE

The present work is a thesis approved by the University of Allahabad for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1947. I have made in it certain changes here and there in the light of subsequent thought.

The topic of our thesis needs neither an explanation nor an apology, for a truly comparative and critical history of the fundamental thoughts of Buddhism and Vedānta, the two most important and mature systems of Indian Philosophy, representing both correctly, was long overdue.

In the present work I have restricted myself to Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta only, firstly, because it is simply impossible to deal with all the schools of Buddhism and of Vedānta in a single treatise like this, secondly, because Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta are the cream of Indian Philosophy, and thirdly, because effective comparison is possible only between these two. Throughout this work, therefore, I have used the word Buddhism for Mahāyāna Buddhism and the word Vedānta for Advaita Vedānta unless, of course, I have mentioned otherwise.

The entire work is based on my own study of the original texts and I am responsible for all interpretations. I have consulted almost all the existent originals that were available to me.

Many rooted prejudices about Buddhism and Vedānta, for example, the view that Shūnyavāda is nihilism, the view that Vijñānavāda is subjective idealism advocating the reality of momentary ideas only, the view that Buddhism by its Nairātmyavāda denies the existence of the true self and by its

Kṣaṇabhaṅga-vāda declares everything to be momentary, the view that Buddhism is opposed to Vedānta, the view that Vedānta has borrowed everything from Buddhism—these and such other wrong views are thoroughly exploded here and many other misconceptions about Buddhism and Vedānta are cleared.

It has been clearly proved in this work that Buddhism and Vedānta are not two *opposed systems* of thought, but only *different stages* in the development of the same thought which starts with the Upaniṣads, finds its indirect support in Buddha, its elaboration in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and its open revival in Gauḍapāda, which reaches its zenith in Śhaṅkara and culminates in Post-Śhaṅkarites.

Some eminent scholars have pointed out the similarities and differences between Buddhism and Vedānta. Some of them have a bias in favour of Buddhism and some in favour of Vedānta. Some of them have, of course, suggested the right view, but it has remained more or less a suggestion only. No body has tried to develop it by tracing the whole history of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta and by supporting it with copious extracts from and references to the original texts. This may be regarded as my humble contribution to Indian Philosophy. I may also mention that many important original points of interpretation will also be found in this work. I am convinced that the line I have taken is the right one which will enable us to view both Buddhism and Vedānta correctly and which will, I hope, encourage further research in the proper direction. How far have I been successful it is for the learned to judge.

I am most grateful to the eminent scholars, Oriental and Occidental, ancient and modern, who or whose works have been a source of help and inspiration to me.



I am deeply obliged to Prof. R. D. Ranade, M. A., D. Litt., Retired Head of the Philosophy Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Offg. Vice-Chancellor, University of Allahabad; Prof. A. C. Mukerji, M. A., Head of the Philosophy Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Allahabad; and Pt. K. Chattopadhyaya, M. A., Department of Sanskrit, University of Allahabad, who have encouraged and helped me in various ways. I cannot express my gratitude and thanks—for it will be sheer impertinence on my part to do so—to my revered and learned father who has kindly explained many difficult portions of the original texts to me and without whose encouragement, help and blessings the present work would not have seen the light of the day.

The Hindi version of this thesis made by me and entitled 'Bauddha Darshana aur Vedānta' was published in 1949 and was awarded the 'Best Books in Hindi' Prize of Rs. 1000/- by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The publication of this original in English was delayed. I am glad it is being published now.

New Year's Day, 1952,  
Department of Philosophy,  
Banaras Hindu University.

**Chandradhar Sharma**



## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have made the following changes in the generally accepted method of transliteration :

श = sha

च = cha

छ = chha

## A NOTE TO REFERENCES

The references to the works given in the foot-notes of this book are to those editions which are mentioned in the Bibliography.

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## ॥ श्रीः ॥

जयन्ति पुण्याः श्रुतयो विषुद्धा या मातरो भारतदर्शनानाम् ।  
 न मीलिकं सौगतदर्शनं च श्रुति हि सैषा जननी जिनानाम् ॥ १ ॥  
 बुद्धस्य यच्छ्रुत्यविरोधि वाक्यं तद्धीनयानेन कृतं हि हीनम् ।  
 आर्याश्वघोषेण पुनः श्रुतेस्तद् वैपुल्यसूत्रैश्च कृतं समीपम् ॥ २ ॥  
 बुद्धानुभावेन यथानुबुद्धम् ज्ञानाग्निभस्मीकृतकोटिवादः ।  
 नागार्जुनः क्षालितहीनपङ्कम् सद्धर्मरत्नं विमलीचकार ॥ ३ ॥  
 स्वभावशून्यान् स हि सर्वधर्मान् प्रपञ्चघन्यञ्च जगाद तत्त्वम् ।  
 अबौद्धमातङ्गकरालकालम् ननाद वै सौगतसिद्धानादम् ॥ ४ ॥  
 विज्ञानभूमौज्वततार लङ्कासूत्रे महायानमुखादसङ्गः ।  
 असङ्गबन्धुर्वसुबन्धुरिन्दुविज्ञप्तिमात्रं विमलीचकार ॥ ५ ॥  
 स्वतन्त्रविज्ञानमतावलम्बिदिङ्नागतकौदधूतमूलशल्पे ।  
 कान्तारमार्गेऽपि सुखं प्रयाति कान्तेव कीर्तिः किल धर्मकीर्तेः ॥ ६ ॥  
 विपक्षनाशी शमरक्षितश्च तच्छिष्यकाष्ठागतपद्मशीलः ।  
 प्रोज्ज्वालयामासतुरेव साधु विज्ञानवादं क्षणभङ्गदुष्टम् ॥ ७ ॥  
 आलोड्य वेदाम्बुनिधिं समस्तम् विद्वद्भ्य आत्मैक्यसुधामदादयः ।  
 अस्पर्शयोगी स हि गौडपादस्ते शून्यविज्ञानमते शर्शस ॥ ८ ॥  
 अद्वैतवेदान्तरसैकतृप्तः स्वनामधन्यः किल शङ्करस्तम् ।  
 स्वतन्त्रविज्ञानमतस्य दोषमपाचकार क्षणभङ्गवादम् ॥ ९ ॥  
 शून्यं हि माया यदि चेत् तथा च विज्ञानमात्रं यदि नित्यमेव ।  
 श्लाघ्याविमो द्वावपि बौद्धवादो निदर्शितौ शाङ्करसम्प्रदाये ॥ १० ॥  
 अद्वैतवादस्य हि पूर्वभूमिं मन्येऽहमेतं ननु बौद्धवादम् ।  
 अयुक्त एवास्त्यनयोविरोधो यतः श्रुतिः सा जननी द्वयोर्हि ॥ ११ ॥  
 प्रकाशितौ वैदिकबौद्धवादौ चित्तेर्गुरुणां कृपया मयात्र ।  
 क्षम्याश्च मे चन्द्रधरस्य दोषाः सद्दर्शने वै सुधियः प्रमाणम् ॥ १२ ॥  
 सिद्धान्तयोर्वैदिकसौगतानां समन्वयं नन्वयमातनोतु ।  
 नूतनैः प्रयत्नैरिति ग्रन्थरत्ने विकलेशलेशो मम सन्निवेशः ॥ १३ ॥  
 विधाय जोषं किल विज्ञमन्यान् सन्न्यायशून्यान् खलवृत्तिधन्यान् ।  
 सौजन्यसंन्यासविधौ वदान्यान्धवन्यसामान्यतया युनक्तु ॥ १४ ॥  
 मम श्रमोऽयं यदि लौकिकार्थं न स्यात् समर्थो न हि कापि हानिः ।  
 स्वान्तस्य तीर्थो विदुषामदोषः सन्तोषपोषो मम सौख्यकोपः ॥ १५ ॥  
 संख्यावतां स्वान्तमधिष्ठितो यो भ्रमविचरात् सौगतदर्शनेषु ।  
 तस्यापनोदो यदि चेत् समोदो धन्यं मदन्यं तु जनं न मन्ये ॥ १६ ॥



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The word 'dialectic' comes from the Greek '*dialego*' which means to debate or to discourse. It was somewhat like the '*shāstrārtha*' in ancient India. Just as in India this word was used by some for mere quibbling (*jalpa* or *vitandā* or *kutarka*) in which victory over the opponent was the main aim, and by others of more refined taste, for discussion to arrive at the truth (*sutarka* or *sannyāya*), so in ancient Greece the word 'dialectic' was used by some sophists as a synonym for verbal jugglery, but was understood by others of more refined taste, as meaning a discussion to get at the truth.

Anaximander was perhaps the first philosopher in the West who taught that the Real was the One, the *Apeiron*, the Boundless, the Infinite, the Eternal, out of which everything arises, by which everything lives, and into which everything once more returns. The world presents us with a series of opposites which are 'at war' against each other. This insistence on the series of opposites, this constant strife in which one 'grows' out of the other, may be taken as a crude prototype of the Hegelian dialectic. The 'mean' of Pythagoras is also a 'form', a 'blend', an 'attunement' or synthesis of the opposites. Heraclitus regards the strife or opposition or 'war' as the 'father of the universe' even as Hegel regards negativity as the 'soul of the universe'. The 'change' of Heraclitus was transformed into 'development', the 'opposite tension' into 'thesis and antithesis', and the 'attunement' into 'synthesis' by Hegel. Parmenides relegated 'becoming' to the sphere of 'opinion' and regarded 'being' as the 'truth'. His disciple Zeno, the father of the method of '*reductio ad absurdum*', and Gorgias, the '*enfant terrible*' of the Eleatic School, developed the destructive side



of the dialectic to its ultimate pitch. Socrates, though he emphasized the negative aspect of the dialectic, wanted really to arrive at the positive truth. Socrates believed that dialectic was the best method to realize the truth. We should point out the inherent contradictions in the arguments of the opponent and show him that his knowledge is merely a superficial one and that therefore he should strive for the true. For Socrates dialectic is the science of the Real. It is the highest science through which we know the 'forms' as they are and know that the apparent plurality of the 'forms' vanishes in the unity of the highest 'form', the 'Form of the Good'. Plāto identified dialectic with metaphysics or philosophy proper meaning by it the 'science of sciences' or the highest science which was to be studied after the preliminary study of music, astronomy, arithmetic and geometry was over. It was the synthetic or the unifying method to know the Real as it is and not merely as it appears to us. It is a method by which one is 'liberated from the cave' of the manifold phenomena and is enabled to see Reality as it shines in its pure light. It is the realization of the 'Idea of the Good' which underlies the world of sense-manifold, which is the 'author of science and truth', 'which imparts truth to the known and the power of knowing to the knower', which manifests itself as the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Beauty and the Supreme Goodness, and which in its essence ultimately transcends these all. Aristotle also equates dialectic with metaphysics which is the science of Being as it is. Substance is 'actualized Being' towards which strives the 'potential Being'. It is the essence or form which makes things what they are.

For Kant dialectic is the illusory logic of the false show. When reason proceeds without reasoning about its power it leads to contradictions, paralogisms and antinomies. The very nature of thought is to be discursive and relational. As long as it remains wedded to sensibility, it can rightly unfold the phenomena,

but the moment it tries to know reality it lands in self-contradictions. It can never know the Real, the Noumenon, the *Ding-an-sich* (thing-in-itself). Hegel rejected the agnosticism of Kant and criticized the thing-in-itself as the most absurd of all philosophical conceptions. Thought is not only discursive intellect but also self-conscious reason or Idea. Dialectic is the march of thought from bare affirmation, through and with negation, to a fuller and richer re-affirmation, or from thesis, through and with antithesis, to synthesis. Thought proceeds in the triumphant triadic march by giving rise to and then overcoming opposition. Contradiction, negation, opposition is not something to be feared; it is, on the other hand, the life, the force, the movement of thought and therefore 'the soul of the universe'. But as the Law of Contradiction reigns supreme, thought cannot rest content within 'a nest of contradictions' and therefore they must be reconciled in the synthesis. The force behind the contradiction is the force of the Whole which is a concrete Identity-in-difference or the self-conscious Reason, the Absolute Idea which is called by Hegel as the Idea-in-and-for-itself. Bradley on the destructive side completes the work of Zeno and Gorgias, pointing out that everything finite when taken to be ultimately real is found to be utterly self-contradictory and hence merely an 'appearance', not 'Reality'. On the constructive side he swings between Kant and Hegel. He maintains with Hegel that Reality is a Spiritual Whole, and with Kant that the real cannot be identified with the rational. Thought has to 'commit suicide' in order to reach Reality. Though in philosophizing which is a sort of game we cannot question the rules of thought, yet thought at best can only give the outlines of Reality; it cannot give its details, its 'why' and 'how', because it is essentially relational. Another challenge to thought comes from Bergson who regards Reality as *élan vital*, the life-impulse which is continually evolving. There is nothing which changes; only ceaseless change exists. Through 'intuition' we realize our participation in this vital



impulse. Intellect only cuts the flow of reality and can give us only unreal moments. Croce retains the Hegelian basic idealism and the view that Reality is a Spiritual whole, but he rejects Hegel's 'panlogism'. He maintains the full force of the dialectic but accuses Hegel of misusing it. Reality is not the 'absolute logical structure, but the actual *process* of spirit'. Thought has in itself opposition and is affirmation and negation. "It does not affirm save by denying, and does not deny save by affirming. But it does not affirm and deny save by distinguishing, because thought is distinction and we cannot distinguish save by unifying". The abstract and analytical aspect of thought is called 'intellect', while its concrete and synthetical aspect is called 'reason'. But thought is always thought and it works with 'pure concepts' as distinguished from 'pseudo-concepts' of the empirical sciences which are merely formal and intellectual. The 'pure concept' is the 'idea', the unity of opposites which is the *a priori* logical synthesis. Thought always implies 'intuition' as a preliminary stage. Intuition is immediate presentation and is itself a creative and communicative expression. Croce departs from Hegel in maintaining the autonomy of the non-logical manifestations of spirit like art and nature. But he maintains the dialectic in its full force and goes a step ahead Hegel in pointing out that there are many implied stages between the thesis and the antithesis, these two being only the towering peaks, 'the minima and the maxima of the logical curve'. The 'dialectical and the historical process is one and the same. Philosophy is history and history is philosophy. The dialectical materialism of Marx, Engels and Lenin reverses Hegelianism but maintains the full force of the dialectic movement, though it applies it primarily to matter which, according to it, is the Reality, and secondarily to thought which is only a copy or a photograph or an image of that Reality. It thus without justification—because the force of the dialectic can never come from matter and must come from thought alone—perverts the Hegelian dialectic by

transferring Reality from the mind to the matter, from the idea to the iron, from the self-conscious Spirit to the hammer and the sickle, forgetting that it is the self-conscious spirit which through the conscious eye and the conscious hand, makes, knows and uses them. The 'process'-realists like Alexander and Whitehead, influenced by the theory of relativity, regard the physical nature in terms of 'events occurring in space-time'. Thus the antithesis between mind and matter is very much lessened. Knowledge, for Alexander, is an act of contemplation which is experienced or 'enjoyed' immediately, the object being 'compresent'. Dialectic is the force or the process of evolution. And evolution is not mechanical or even continuous; it is purposive and emergent. The emergence of purposiveness in life and mind is consistent with the lower levels of nature.

In the field of Indian Philosophy too we find both the negative and the positive aspects of the dialectic. Jainism, Sāṅkya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Rāmānuja-Vedānta and Madhva-Vedānta advocate more or less pluralistic realism. Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita-Vedānta are champions of absolute idealism. The Jainas like Kundakunda, Akalaṅka, Vidyānanda, Siddhasena, Samantabhadra, Hemachandra and Malliṣeṇa; Īśhvarakṛṣṇa and Vijñānabhikṣu in Sāṅkya; the Naiyāyikas like Uddyotakara, Udayana, Jayanta, Gaṅgesha, Raghunātha and Jagadīsha; the Mīmāṃsakas like Prabhākara, Kumārila, Shālikanātha and Pārthasārathī; the theistic Vedāntins like Rāmānuja, Sudarshana, Veṅkaṭanātha, Meghanādāri, Madhva, Jayatīrtha, Vyāsātīrtha and others have defended pluralistic realism and attacked absolute idealism with very great dialectical subtleties. But the defence of pluralism appears to be weak as compared with the onslaughts of the monists and the realistic pluralists have either embraced self-contradictions or else they have implicitly accepted absolutism. Before the mighty strokes of the destructive dialectic of the Buddhists like Nāgārjuna, Chandrakīrti,



Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti, Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla and of the Advaita Vedāntins like Gauḍapāda, Śhaṅkara, Maṇḍana, Vāchaspati, Vimuktātman, Prakāśhātman, Sureśvara, Vidyāranya, Śrīhara, Chitsukha and Madhusūdana, the entire edifice of all finite and phenomenal things, consisting of the categories and concepts of the intellect, of substance, qualities, action, motion, change, thinghood, ego, morality, God, religion and even philosophy, appears to crumble down like a house of cards or a palace built on sand. But to admit that these appearances are entirely lost is to show greatest disrespect to their dialectical genius. The constructive side of their dialectic tells us that the appearances are *empirically real* and are transformed into the Non-dual Reality which does not annihilate intellect but perfects it. Reality can best be described by negative terms. But if we insist on positive description, as we should, it can be best described as Pure Reason or Pure Experience or Pure Consciousness which is at once Pure Existence and Pure Bliss. The Buddhists call it Tathatā or Shūnya or Vijñānamātra; the Vedāntins call it Brahman or Ātman.

Reality exists by itself and in itself and is therefore self-proved and can never be sublated. Pure Consciousness alone satisfies these conditions in the definition of reality and therefore it alone deserves to be called real. It cannot be fully grasped by relational intellect. Intellect can give us only the subject-object duality which it cannot transcend. Intellect, therefore, must be transformed into something higher—call it 'intuition' or 'pure reason' or anything else—which can directly reveal Reality. That intellect always functions through contradictions and that it must realize its limitations is the negative side of the dialectic; that intellect should be transformed into the pure transcendental unity of Reason or Intuition which is supra-rational is the constructive side of the dialectic. Reality itself appears as matter (anna), life (prāṇa), instinct (manas), relational intellect (vijñāna) and self-conscious blissful reason or

intuition (ānanda). Matter is on the physical plane. Life is on the biological plane. Instinct is on the psychological plane. Intellect is on the metaphysical plane. Pure reason or intuition is on the mystical plane. Dialectic is the power of self-manifestation of Reality. It is the development of reason from within. The Absolute, through its own power, appears as undergoing the evolutionary process, though in fact it is untouched by it. Dialectic is implicit in matter, life and instinct. It becomes explicit only in intellect. Hence dialectic is the monopoly of the human life. It has two aspects—the negative or the destructive, and the positive or the constructive. In the negative aspect it is analytical and discursive intellect and proceeds through pointing out inherent contradictions in everything finite. When a finite thing is mistaken as absolutely real, its true nature breaks forth and reveals its inherent contradictions which relegate it to its proper sphere of the relative. In the positive aspect, dialectic is the synthetic and transcendent reason or intuition. It reconciles all contradictions by transcending the subject-object duality. Here to know the Real is to become the Real. To enjoy this supreme experience, intellect must be transformed into pure reason or intuition, even as animal instinct must be transformed into human intellect before it can move in the sphere of the subject-object duality.

Dialectic is generally identified with its negative aspect only. Either it is misunderstood as sheer verbal quibbling, as intellectual gymnastics or somersaults of thought, as futile logical hair-splitting or discussion for the shake of discussion only, as a "dazzling show of intellectual fire-works" or as a degenerate intellectual jugglery resembling the rope-trick of the jugglers (baudhiki-nāṭa-vidyā; jalpa; vitaṇḍā; kutarka); or at best it is identified with true intellect (sutarka) which is essentially relational, discursive, analytic and finite, which proceeds with the force of contradiction pointing out the inherent self-discrepancies in everything finite



and phenomenal when taken to be ultimately real, and which has to confess its impotence to know Reality and has to commit suicide in order to be one with it. The former view, we submit, is entirely wrong and the latter is partial. It is highly improper to restrict dialectic to its negative sense only. Because thought cannot rest content with contradictions, it has to find out a way for their reconciliation. The antithesis must necessarily lead to synthesis. The very fact that dialectic is condemned as merely negative implies that it must logically have a positive sense also because there can be no negation without affirmation.

The positive side of the dialectic at once brings us to the age-old controversy between Rationalism and Mysticism. There are three alternatives: (1) Either we should say like Kant that Reality is unknowable; or (2) we should admit like Hegel that 'the Rational is the Real and the Real is the Rational'; or (3) we may swing between Kant and Hegel and maintain like Bradley that though in the sphere of philosophy thought reigns supreme yet it has to commit suicide in order to reach Reality. The third alternative is the weakest and should be immediately discarded. The first alternative is also untenable. We agree with Hegel in maintaining that there can be no criticism of thought *ab extra*. All attempts of criticism and distinction will fall within thought itself. He who says that "Reality is unknowable" either does not know what he is saying or is talking in self-contradiction for he at least knows that Reality exists and further knows that it is unknowable. Reality is certainly Indescribable in the sense that relational intellect fails to describe it adequately. But it is most assuredly not unknowable. On the other hand it is the most known of all. No great thinker has seriously maintained that Reality can be identified with relational intellect. But it also does not mean that thought is to be annihilated. Pure Thought or Pure Reason or Consciousness itself in its phenomenal aspect is relational intellect or discursive understanding. It is therefore

not an annihilation but a correction and a perfection of the intellect. We however agree with the Buddhists and the Vedāntins as against the Jainas, Bhartṛprapañcha, Nimbārka, and Rāmānuja and also against Hegel and Bradley, in maintaining that though Reality is the self-conscious Spirit which is the same thing as Pure Consciousness, it cannot ultimately be called Identity-in-difference. Appearances cannot retain their individuality in the Absolute. "No flame of passion, chaste or carnal" can burn in the Absolute retaining its individual capacity. Individuality is the creation of Ignorance, How can it remain when knowledge dawns? No distinction between 'individuality' and 'egoity' will be of any avail here. Egoity, of course, is a baser thing. But even individuality has to be transcended in the Absolute. But our Absolute is neither the "lion's den" nor "the night in which all cows are black". If the river runs into the sea, does it mean that the river is destroyed? It has rather become the ocean. It has reached the highest perfection. Appearances are transformed into Reality. Every particle of dust, every meanest iota of the universe becomes the Real. Ultimately there are no grades of truth, no degrees of Reality, though their phenomenal reality is emphasized. Undoubtedly identity-in-difference is the highest conception of the intellect and therefore perfectly valid in the empirical world. But ultimately even identity-in-difference has to be transcended together with the intellect. The intuitional unity is not bare identity. It is supra-relational and indescribable. For want of better term we call it pure identity. Thought always functions with identity-in-difference. Bare identity and bare difference are figments of the imagination or pseudo-concepts. Bare identity is undifferentiated identity of the sense and is infra-relational. The mystical pure identity is, on the other hand, supra-relational.

Now, what is this 'intuition' in praise of which various hymns, the mystics—Eastern and Western, old and new—have sung, are singing and will sing? Does



it mean the denial of thought and the re-affirmation of infra-relational feeling? A true mystic, we are sure, will answer this question with us in an emphatic negative. Probably a mystic will come forward and say that the question cannot be answered because intuition is something which cannot be described. Agreed! we urge provided he understands the full implication of his statement. Either he should maintain absolute silence or he should say that intuition is indescribable because it transcends and is higher than relational intellect. This intuition will be the same as our Pure Reason. But if 'intuition' means that it is something quite different from thought and therefore, by implication, something infra-relational, this intuitionism stands self-condemned. Feeling is a sort of whole because it is entirely undifferentiated and infra-relational. The moment we try to think about it it is aroused from its slumber and realizing its utter insignificance it surrenders itself at the feet of thought and with folded hands begs for a place in the systematic world. To hold this undifferentiated infra-relational immediacy of sense as the ideal for thought is certainly absurd. Instead of rising from the mortal plane of intellect to the heaven of Reason, should we descend to the hell of feeling? But a true mystic does not degrade his intuition to such feeling. His intuition is our Pure Reason. There is only difference in name. Let us call this intuition as pure intuition. This Pure Intuition or Pure Consciousness is the only Reality and it appears as finite intellect on account of Ignorance. It is not the negation of intellect but its transformation into Reason. Intellect confesses its impotence only to be rejuvenated with new life and eternal vigour and what appears to be its suicide is in fact its consecration. Only a true rationalist can be a real mystic and only a true mystic can be a real rationalist. In vain have some of the mystics and the rationalists fought against each other. Let intuition be higher thought, but not higher than thought as such, and let it not degenerate into infra-relational undifferentiated feeling, and all difficulties will be removed.

To some our distinction between analytic intellect and synthetic reason, between lower and higher thought, may appear meaningless. To them we make the following reply : We readily admit that this distinction is relative, not absolute because it is made by intellect itself. It is a practical compromise because it is valid only from the empirical standpoint. The distinction is the same as the distinction between empirical and absolute standpoints, between phenomena and noumenon between appearance and Reality, between samvṛti or vyavahāra and paramārtha, between opinion and truth, between illusion and Absolute. The '*Neti Neti*' of Yājñavalkya, the 'unknowable' of Spencer, the '*je ne sais quoi*' of Locke, the '*Ding-an-sich*' of Kant, the '*Cognoscendo Ignorari*' of Augustine, the '*Weder Dies Noch Das*' of Eckhart, the '*Ignorabimus*' of Reymond, the '*somehow*' and '*we do not know how*' of Bradley, the '*Nirabhilāpya*' or '*Avāchya*' of Buddhism, the '*Anirvachanīya*' of Vedānta—all these are the cries of finite intellect and not of pure reason. The moment they are taken to be the result of the impotence of thought as such, they stand self-condemned. The distinction, therefore, between lower and higher thought, we maintain, is perfectly valid and most necessary from empirical standpoint. To question its validity here is either to refuse to think or to embrace utter self-contradiction.

We agree with Plato in identifying dialectic with metaphysics or philosophy proper. It is the highest science of the First Principles. It wants to know Reality as it is and not merely as it appears to us. As thought, dialectic has two aspects—the negative or the destructive, and the positive or the constructive. In its negative aspect dialectic is intellect or understanding or tarka, mati, buddhi, yukti. It is relational, discursive and analytic. It proceeds by pointing out inherent contradictions in every finite thing. In its positive aspect dialectic is Pure Consciousness or the self-luminous Self or the self-conscious Reason or Pure Thought or Pure Intuition. It is Prajñā, Vijñāna, Jñāna, Chit,



Samvit or Svānubhūti. It is direct, immediate, unifying, self-conscious and synthetic. It reconciles all contradictions.

The constructive dialectic tells us that Reality far from being unknowable is infact the most known. It is called indescribable or unthinkable only in the sense that no category of intellect can fully and adequately describe it. It can be best described by negative terms, though it is certainly not negative. It is to be directly realized through Reason; it cannot be philosophized through intellect. Thus the philosophy of silence is the highest philosophy. This silence is neither the silence of the dumb nor the silence of the fool; it is, on the other hand, the silence of the wisest of the wise. It is the silence which speaks for itself in a way in which all human speech is unable to do. It is the thunderous silence of the Buddhist Vimalakīrti who answered questions about Non-dual Reality by silence and others exclaimed: 'Well done! The ultimate truth is really beyond speech and intellect'.<sup>1</sup> It is the great silence of the Vedāntin Bādhya who told Vāṣkali: 'I am answering your question by my silence but you do not understand. The highest Self is silence'.<sup>2</sup> It is the renowned silence of the Great Śaṅkara who finally preached by silence and all the doubts of the disciples were removed.<sup>3</sup> It is the famous silence of the Upaniṣads.<sup>4</sup> It is the celebrated '*Anirvachanīyatā*' of Buddhism and Vedānta. It is not the silence of the grave-yard, it is the silence which breaths new life and new meaning into the entire outlook towards the universe. 'When one embraces Reality, grief and delusion are

<sup>1</sup> Suzuki: Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism, pp. 105-107.

<sup>2</sup> ब्रूमः खलु त्वं तु न विजानासि, उपशान्तोऽयमात्मेति ।

Śaṅkara-Bhāṣya, III, 2, 17.

<sup>3</sup> चित्रं बटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्मुखा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यातं शिष्यास्तु च्छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra.

<sup>4</sup> तज्जलानिति शान्त उपासीत ।

gone.<sup>1</sup> It is here that the full significance of the life of "the honest man and the good citizen" so much stressed by Green is realized. Plato's liberated cave-dweller returns to the cave to liberate others. Here the real teaching of the Gītā is realized. It is at this stage that one is ready like Buddha to bear the suffering of the whole world,<sup>2</sup> like a Bodhisattva to defer his own Nirvāṇa in order to strive for the liberation of others, like Shiva and Socrates to drink the cup of poison so that humanity may be saved and bettered, and like Christ to crucify one's flesh to save the soul of the world.

Prince Siddhārtha has gone, but the Buddha remains. The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path have a meaning for us even today. The Enlightenment which dawned upon the mortal Siddhārtha and which transformed him into the immortal Buddha, serves us even today. The Dharma-chakra, the wheel of Pratītya-samutpāda, first turned by the Buddha at the deer park in Sarnath still revolves. The Great Decease of the Buddha at Kushīnārā, so vividly described in the Māhā-parinirvāṇasūtra, proves it beyond doubt that every one of us is a potential Buddha.

Buddhism is divided into many schools and has a vast literature. It is very difficult to say what exactly are the teachings of Buddha himself and what are the interpretations, amplifications and elaborations put upon them by the disciples. Buddha was primarily an ethical teacher and a social reformer than a theoretical philosopher. He referred to a number of philosophical views prevalent in his time and condemned them as futile. Whenever metaphysical questions were put to him, he avoided them by saying that they were neither profitable nor conducive to the highest good. Human existence is full of misery and pain. Our immediate

<sup>1</sup> तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ।

<sup>2</sup> कलिकलुषकृतानि यानि लोके मयि तानि पतन्तु विमुच्यतां हि लोकः ।



duty, therefore, is to get rid of this misery and pain. If instead we bother about barren metaphysical speculations, we behave like that foolish man whose heart is pierced by a poisonous arrow and who, instead of taking it out, wastes his time on idle speculation about the origin, size, metal, maker and thrower of the arrow.<sup>1</sup> Buddha is reported to have said in one of the Suttas : "Surely do I know much more than what I have told you. And wherefore, my disciples, have I not told you that? Because, my disciples, it brings you no profit, it does not conduce to progress in holiness, because it does not lead to the turning from the earthly, to the subjection of all desire, to the cessation of the transitory, to peace, to knowledge, to illumination, to Nirvāṇa".<sup>2</sup>

Buddha emphasized the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold path and the Doctrine of Dependent Origination. There is nothing in these teachings that would seriously militate against the Upaniṣadic teachings. Our contention is that Buddha was greatly influenced by the Upaniṣadic philosophy and the Lamp of Dharma which he bequeathed to his disciples was borrowed from the Upaniṣads. But the Hīnayāna made the constant and the luminous light of this Lamp flickering and faint. The Hīnayāna, therefore, represents not the real teaching of the Buddha, but, as Mrs. Rhys Davids says, "the verbal superstructures, the formulas often being held up as what he (Buddha) taught".<sup>3</sup> Mahāyāna also says that Hīnayāna philosophy is either due to the adjustment in the teaching by the Buddha to suit the needs of the less qualified disciples (*upāyakaushalya*) or due to their lack of understanding the real significance of the teachings of the Master.

Hīnayāna philosophy which is a radical pluralism based on the doctrine of universal momentariness is

<sup>1</sup> Majjhima-nikāya, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Oldenberg : Buddha, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> A Manual of Buddhism, Preface, ix.

a bundle of contradictions. Though outwardly it says it believes in the reality of all—*sarvāstivāda*, yet in fact it undermines the reality of all. It has reduced mind to momentary ideas, matter to momentary atoms and God to the relics of the Buddha's body. When the famous fourteen questions regarding God, soul and matter were put to Buddha, he answered them by his silence. The significance of the Buddha's silence, as the *Mahāyāna* points out, lies in the fact that these antinomies are ultimately insoluble by the intellect. Discursive reasoning always proceeds through duality and contradiction and must be transformed into direct spiritual vision if the Real is to be realized. But *Hīnayāna* mistakes the silence of the Buddha as signifying the denial of God, soul and matter.

The defects in the *Hīnayāna* philosophy were corrected by the *Mahāyānists* who gave a right interpretation of the teachings of the Buddha in the light of the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy. The idea of liberation in *Hīnayāna* is said to be negative and egoistic. *Mahāyāna* believes that *Nirvāṇa* is not a negative cessation of misery but a positive state of bliss. Its ideal saint is *Bodhisattva* who defers his own *Nirvāṇa* in order to work for the salvation of others. He is ready to suffer gladly so that he may liberate others. Dry asceticism of the *Hīnayāna* is replaced by an enlightened and loving interest in this world. The denial of God is replaced by the Buddha's Divinity. The Buddha is the Absolute Self running through all existences. The explosion of matter and mind by their reduction to momentary atoms and momentary ideas respectively, is replaced by the admission of the relative reality of both, the transcendental reality being the Absolute, the Luminous Body of the Buddha. The *Mahāyānists* are reasonably proud of their faith as a progressive and dynamic religion which throbs with vitality because it has the capacity to adapt itself to the changing environmental conditions, preserving its essentials in tact.



The fundamental thoughts of Advaita Vedānta have been considerably influenced by their development in the Mahāyāna literature. As a matter of fact Mahāyāna and Advaita are not two opposed systems of thought but only different stages in the development of the same central thought. The view of the dialectic to which we have subscribed in both its aspects—negative and positive—has been a result of gradual development in these two great systems which are the cream of Indian Philosophy. It is, therefore, very desirable to trace the development of the dialectic throughout its various stages in Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta.

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## CHAPTER II

### SHŪNYAVĀDA

*Ashvaghōṣa, the first systematic expounder of Mahāyāna:*

The great philosophical work of Ashvaghōṣa, the *Mahāyāna-shraddhotpāda-shāstra* or the 'Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna' which entitles him to the rank of the first systematic expounder of Mahāyāna is not available in original Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup> It has been translated into English from the Chinese translation of Paramārtha by T. Suzuki and also by T. Richard. Our study of Ashvaghōṣa is mainly based on these two translations.

Ashvaghōṣa tells us that after Buddha's Nirvāṇa, there were very few persons who could understand the real implication of the many-sided teachings of Buddha, and that therefore the object of his Shāstra is to unfold the fundamental teaching of the Tathāgata as against the errors of the laymen (Pṛthag-jana) and of the Hīnayānists—the Shrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas.<sup>2</sup>

Reality is Tathatā. As the ultimate Existence, it is called Bhūta-tathatā; as Pure Reason, it is called Bodhi or Prajñā or Ālayavijñāna; as a Harmonious Whole, it is called Dharmakāya or Dharmadhātu; and as Bliss having infinite merits, it is called Tathāgatagarbha. Viewed from the empirical standpoint, it is saṁsāra or the cycle of birth and death; viewed from

<sup>1</sup> Profs. Takakusu and Winternitz maintain that Ashvaghōṣa is not the author of this work. But we think Prof. Suzuki has given strong arguments to prove and support the Chinese tradition that Ashvaghōṣa is the author of this work.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna': Suzuki, p. 47 Richard, p. 1.

the ultimate standpoint, it is Nirvāṇa or the realization of positive bliss. It is essentially Indescribable because intellect cannot compass it. It is beyond the four categories of the Understanding. It is neither existence nor non-existence nor both nor neither; it is neither unity nor plurality nor both nor neither; it is neither affirmation nor negation nor both nor neither.<sup>1</sup> When it is said that all worldly things are unreal what is meant is that they are only phenomenally real. The Absolute is the ultimate Reality. All phenomena are found to be merely relative. Relativity (Pratītyasamutpāda) is the work of Ignorance. Ignorance has no existence of its own, yet it is not entirely unreal as it produces the objective world. "It is wrong to take the work of Ignorance as ultimate and to forget the foundation on which it stands".<sup>2</sup>

Relational intellect cannot give us Reality. "When one can apprehend that which is behind (discursive) thought, one is on the way to Buddhist Wisdom" says Ashvaghoṣa.<sup>3</sup> "The reason why the Tathāgata nevertheless endeavours to instruct by means of words and definitions is through his good and excellent skillfulness. He only provisionally makes use of words and definitions to lead all beings, while his real object is to make them abandon symbolism and directly enter into Reality".<sup>4</sup> But intellect all the same is not to be annihilated. Ashvaghoṣa emphatically asserts that "If we dispense with finite enlightenment, we cannot conceive of true enlightenment".<sup>5</sup> It is Reason itself which appears as intellect. The Absolute itself through Ignorance appears as this manifold world of phenomena. Just as, says Ashvaghoṣa, calm water of the ocean, on account of wind, appears as waves, similarly consciousness, on

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, Suzuki, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism : Suzuki, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna, Richard, p. 7

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Suzuki, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Richard. p. 10.



account of ignorance, appears as finite intellects.<sup>1</sup> Just as clay is transformed into various kinds of pottery, similarly One Consciousness manifests itself as so many finite intellects.<sup>2</sup> Absolute Suchness, ultimately speaking, transcends everything. But tainted with Ignorance it manifests itself as Conditional Suchness. And our phenomenal world, subjective as well as objective, is the result of the sport of this Conditional Suchness. When true knowledge dawns we realize that we are no more finite beings but Absolute Suchness itself. This is the self-existent immortal Reality, Calm and Blissful which must be realized.<sup>3</sup> Buddha, the Shining Sun of Enlightenment, kindly rises in this world to destroy the darkness of Ignorance. A Bodhisattva, though he has realised what is to be realized and though for him nothing remains to be done, yet, following the example of Buddha, he has, out of compassion, to defer his own Nirvāṇa in order to liberate those who are still entangled in the meshes of suffering.<sup>4</sup>

There is hardly any important doctrine in any school of Mahāyāna which cannot be traced back to Ashva-ghoṣa. The point that Reality is Indescribable and beyond all the categories of intellect and that therefore it can be called neither Shūnya nor Ashūnya nor both nor neither, was developed by Shūnyavāda, and the point that Reality is Consciousness was developed by Vijñānavāda.

*Shūnyavāda* :—

Shūnyavāda is one of the most important schools of Buddhism. Nāgārjuna cannot be called its founder

<sup>1</sup> See Richard. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See Richard. p. 11

<sup>3</sup> शान्तं शिवं साक्षिकुण्डलं धर्मम् । क्षेमं पदं नैष्टिकमच्युतं तत् ॥

—Saundarananda, xvi. 26 & 27.

<sup>4</sup> Saundarananda, xviii, 54.



because it was present before him in the Mahāyāna Sūtras, some of which are prior even to Ashvaghoṣa, and in Ashvaghoṣa. Nāgārjuna is only the first systematic expounder of Shūnyavāda. However it is to the glory of Nāgārjuna that he seized these threads and wove them into unity; it is to the greatness of Nāgārjuna that he developed these more or less scattered ideas almost to perfection in a thoroughly consistent manner.

Shūnyavādins call themselves Mādhyamikas or the followers of the Middle Path realised by Buddha during his Enlightenment, which Path, avoiding the errors of existence and non-existence, affirmation and negation, eternalism and nihilism, also at once transcends both the extremes. It is a great irony of fate that the followers of such a path are condemned by some as nihilists.

Unfortunately the word 'Shūnya' has been gravely misunderstood. The literal meaning of the word which is negation or void has been the cause of much misunderstanding. The word is used by the Mādhyamikas in a different philosophical sense. Ignoring the real philosophical meaning of the word 'Shūnya' and taking it only in its literal sense, many thinkers, eastern and western, ancient, medieval and modern, have unfortunately committed that horrible blunder which has led them to thoroughly misunderstand Shūnyavāda and to condemn it as a hopeless scepticism and a self-condemned nihilism. Shūnya, according to the Mādhyamika, we emphatically maintain, does not mean a 'nothing' or an 'empty void' or a 'negative abyss'. Shūnya essentially means Indescribable (Avāchya or anabhilāpya) because beyond the four categories of intellect (Chatuṣkoṭi-vinirmukta). It is Reality which ultimately transcends existence, non-existence, both and neither. It is neither affirmation nor negation nor both nor neither. Empirically it means Relativity (Pratītya-Samutpāda) which is phenomena (Saṃsāra); absolutely it means Reality (Tattva) which is release from plurality (Nirvāṇa). The world is Indescribable

because it is neither existent nor non-existent; the Absolute is Indescribable because it being Pure Reason, no category of intellect can adequately describe it. Everything is Shūnya—appearances are *Svabhāva-shūnya* or devoid of ultimate reality and Reality is *Prapañcha-shūnya* or devoid of plurality. Thus Shūnya is used in a double sense. It means the relative as well as the Absolute. It means Relativity as well as Reality. It means Saṃsāra as well as Nirvāṇa. That which is phenomenal, that which is dependent and conditional and therefore relative cannot be called ultimately real even as borrowed wealth cannot be called real capital. All appearances (Dharmas) being relative (*Pratītya-samutpanna*), have no real origination (*Paramārtha-to'nutpanna*) and are therefore devoid of ultimate reality (*Svabhāva-shūnya* or *Nissvabhāva* or *Anātman*). But they are not absolutely unreal. They must belong to Reality. It is the Real itself which appears. And this Real is the Absolute, the Non-dual Harmonious Whole in which all plurality is merged (*Prapañcha-shūnya* or *Nisprapañcha* or *Advaya Tattva*). Shūnya therefore does not mean 'Void'; it means, on the other hand, 'Devoid'—so far as appearances are concerned 'of ultimate reality', and so far as Reality is concerned, 'of plurality'. It is clearly wrong to translate the word 'Shūnya' as 'nothing or void'; and even to translate it as 'Relativity' as Prof. Stcherbatsky has done, is but to represent only one aspect of it.

Ashvaghoṣa said that Tathatā is neither Shūnya nor Ashūnya nor both nor neither because it transcends all categories of the intellect. "All things in the World from beginning are neither matter nor mind (empirical ego), nor consciousness (momentary and individual), nor non-being, nor being; they are after all, inexplicable".<sup>1</sup> But this does not mean that there is no reality because it is the Real itself which appears. "The

<sup>1</sup> The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna: Suzuki, pp. 111—112.



divine nature of the Absolute Reality is not unreal".<sup>1</sup>

The Shūnyavādins take 'existence', 'is', 'affirmation', 'being' in the sense of absolute existence or ultimate reality; it means Eternalism. Those who maintain that the world exists are committing a great error because when we penetrate deep we find that this entire world with all its manifold phenomena is essentially relative and therefore ultimately unreal. And those who advocate non-existence or non-being are also committing a great error because they are denying even the phenomenal reality of the world. They are condemned by the Shūnyavādins as nihilists (nāstikas). Eternalism and Nihilism are both false. Intellect which is essentially discursive, analytic and relational involves itself in contradictions. All that can be grasped by it is essentially relative. It gives us four categories—existence, non-existence, both and neither—and involves itself in 62 antinomies.<sup>2</sup> It cannot give us Reality. Reality transcends all the categories and reconciles all the antinomies of intellect. It is to be directly realized through Pure Reason. It is the Non-dual Absolute in which all plurality is merged. We must rise above the subject-object duality of the intellect and the plurality of the phenomena.

The *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-Sūtra* says : Not knowing that in the reign of intellect, Relativity holds the sway, not knowing that everything phenomenal is dependent, not knowing that "this being, that arises" is the empirical law called Dependent Origination, people, like blind born men, go on revolving in the wheel of Birth-and-Death that is Saṃsāra.<sup>3</sup> He who knows that all empirical *dharma*s are Shūnya or devoid of self-reality,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : Richard, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Dīgha-nikāya, 1, *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, p. 139.



knows the supreme wisdom of the Buddhas.<sup>1</sup> He who knows that all worldly objects are like illusion and dreams, essence-less like a plaitain trunk, only echoes of Reality, that there is neither bondage nor release, that all dharmas are absolutely equal, that in fact difference does not exist, knows the truth and attains to the immortal blissful Nirvāṇa.<sup>2</sup>

It is declared again and again in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* that no object of thought can resist ultimate scrutiny, that every phenomenal object, when taken to be ultimately real, will be found self-contradictory or shūnya, the mere fact that it is an object of finite intellect proves that it has only conditional or relative existence. The five skandhas are an illusion. There is no 'person' that can be liberated nor is there any doctrine by which he may be liberated; there is no 'person' that can be bound nor is there anything by which he may be bound. The 'thinghood' of a thing is an illusion. Nothing has an origination. There is no element, no person, no dharma. Mahāyāna is a self-contradiction. Nirvāṇa is an illusion. Even if there is anything greater than Nirvāṇa, that too will be only an illusion.<sup>3</sup> A Bodhisattva is a mere dream. Even the Buddha is only a name. Even the Perfect Wisdom itself is a mere name. Dreams, echoes, reflections, images, mirage, illusion, magic, void—such are all objects of intellect.<sup>4</sup> The *Shatasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* also condemns all dharmas as illusory. They have neither origination nor decay, they neither increase nor decrease, they are neither suffering nor its cessation, they are neither affirmation nor negation, neither eternal

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Saddharmapuṇḍarika, p. 142 143.

<sup>3</sup> निर्वाणमपि मायोपमं स्वप्नोपममिति वदामि किं पुनरन्यद् धर्मम् । यदि निर्वाणादप्यन्यः कश्चिद् धर्मो विशिष्टतरः स्यात् तमप्यहं मायोपमं स्वप्नोपममिति वदेयम् । *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 25, 39, 196, 198, 200, 205, 279, 483, 484.

nor momentary, neither *shūnya* nor *ashūnya*.<sup>1</sup> They are mere names and forms. They are *Māyā*. And *Māyā* is declared to be an inconsistent category which cannot resist dialectical scrutiny and which is ultimately found to be neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>2</sup> All phenomena are mere names ; they are only a convention, a usage, a practical compromise.<sup>3</sup> The *Laṅkāvatāra* also condemns them to be like an illusion, a dream, a mirage, a hare's horn, a barren woman's son, a magic city, the double Moon, a moving fire-brand presenting an appearance of a circle, a hair seen floating in the atmosphere by defective vision, an empty space, a sky-flower, a mere echo, a reflection, a painting, a puppet like mechanism, which can be called neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>4</sup> The *Lalita-vistara*<sup>5</sup>, the *Samādhirāja*,<sup>6</sup> and the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*<sup>7</sup> also join in such descriptions.

The *Laṅkāvatāra* tells us that intellect gives us discrimination (*vikalpa*) and dualism (*dvaita*), not Reality. The entire phenomenal practices of the world depend on the four categories of the intellect.<sup>8</sup> Entangled in these categories, people do not try to realize Reality through reason. Thought (*Jñāna*) has got two aspects : the first is called intellect (*Tarka*) which proceeds with the subject-object duality; the second is reason (*Prajñā*) which enables us to realize the Formless and Unqualified Absolute.<sup>9</sup> Those who

<sup>1</sup> *Shatasāhasrikā*, pp. 119, 120, 185, 262.

<sup>2</sup> नामरूपमेव माया मायैव नामरूपम् । Ibid, p. 898.

मायायाः पदं न विद्यते । Ibid, p. 1209.

<sup>3</sup> यच्च प्रज्ञप्तिधर्मं तस्य नोत्पादो न निरोधोऽन्यत्र संज्ञासंकेतमात्रेण व्यवहियते । Ibid. p. 325.

<sup>4</sup> *Lankāvatāra*, pp. 22, 51, 62, 84, 85, 90, 95, 105.

<sup>5</sup> See pages 176, 177, and 181.

<sup>6</sup> See pages 27 and 29.

<sup>7</sup> See pages 31 32 and 44.

<sup>8</sup> चातुष्कोटिकं च महामते ! लोकव्यवहारः ।—*Laṅkāvatāra*, p. 188.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 130.



are entangled in the meshes of intellect are worse than dogs and they can never know the Real.<sup>1</sup> Just as elephants are stuck in huge mud, so are these fools entangled in language, in letters, words and names.<sup>2</sup> 'Everything has a cause' and 'nothing has a cause'; 'everything is eternal' and 'everything is momentary'; 'everything is unity' and 'everything is plurality'; 'everything is expressible' and 'everything is inexpressible'; 'soul exists' and 'soul does not exist'; 'matter exists' and 'matter does not exist'; 'the other world exists' and 'the other world does not exist'; 'there is liberation' and 'there is no liberation'—all this is gross and crude philosophy (Lokāyata). In real philosophy we have to transcend the categories of intellect.<sup>3</sup>

Before the mighty strokes of the destructive dialectic of *Nāgārjuna* and his commentator *Chandrakīrti* the entire structure of phenomenal objects crumbles down like a house of cards or a palace on sand. The external objects and the individual subject, matter, motion, causality, time, space, thinghood, qualities, relations, attributes, substance, soul, God, religion, morality, the four Noble Truths, Nirvāṇa and the Buddha are all found to be hypostatized relations. But from the empirical viewpoint they are all quite real, though ultimately they are all merged in the bosom of the Absolute.

In the very first stanza of his *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, *Nāgārjuna* gives his famous eight 'Noes' and in the next salutes Buddha, the perfectly Enlightened and the greatest of all teachers, who has taught *Pratītyasamutpāda* which, viewed from the absolute standpoint is blissful Nirvāṇa itself wherein all plurality is merged. From the absolute standpoint there is neither destruction nor

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 176, 177.



production, neither nihilism nor eternalism, neither unity nor plurality, neither coming in nor going out.<sup>1</sup>

Nāgārjuna opens his work by boldly proclaiming the doctrine of No-origination. Never and nowhere can anything be produced. A thing can originate neither out of itself nor out of a not-self nor out of both nor out of neither.<sup>2</sup> A thing cannot arise out of itself. If the effect is already existent in its cause, it is already an existing fact requiring no further production; if the effect does not exist in its cause, nothing can produce it for nothing can produce a hare's horn or a barren woman's son. And if a thing cannot arise out of itself, how can it arise out of a not-self? Again, to say that a thing can arise out of both itself and not-self is to maintain that light and darkness can remain together. And certainly nothing can arise at random and uncaused. Chandrakīrti also gives similar arguments.<sup>3</sup>

Nāgārjuna then examines the four conditions (Pratyaya) of the Hīnayāna. A producing cause (Hetu) is an impossibility because if a cause has no essence it is like a hare's horn, and how can a cause have any essence when neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing nor a thing which is both, can be produced. So is the case with an object (Ālambana). If in the beginning, a subject arises independently of an object, how can that subject afterwards depend on its objective counterpart? Again, when things do not exist, how

<sup>1</sup> अनिरोधमनुत्पादमनुच्छेदमशास्वत्तम् ।

अनेकार्यमतानार्यगतानाममनिर्गमम् ॥

यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादं प्रपञ्चोपशमं शिवम् ।

देशवामासं सम्बुद्धस्तं बन्दे बदती वस्म् ॥

Mādhyamika Kārikā, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> न स्वतो नापि परतो न द्वाभ्यां नाप्यहेतुतः ।

उत्पन्ना जातु विद्यन्ते भावाः क्वचन केचन ॥ —Ibid, I, 1.

<sup>3</sup> See his Mādhyamakāvatāra as quoted in his Mādhyamika-vṛtti on pages 13, 36 and 38.

can they disappear? Therefore there can be no immediately preceding moment (*Samanantara*). Moreover, if an immediately preceding moment disappears, how can it be a cause? If a seed is destroyed, then what is that which will be called the cause of a sprout? Again, if things are relative they cannot have an independent existence or ultimate reality. And a thing which is not real can be neither produced nor destroyed. So the decisive factor (*Adhipati*) or the formula 'this being, that arises' (*asmin sati idam bhavati*) becomes non-sense. Hence in none of these four *Pratyayas*, neither singly nor jointly, can we find the so-called 'effect'. And if it does not exist in them, how can it be produced out of them? If the effect pre-exists in the cause, then milk should be called curd and threads should be called cloth. And if the effect does not pre-exist in the cause, then curd should be produced out of water and cloth should be produced out of reeds. In the former case, the effect is already an existent fact and its repeated birth is non-sense; in the latter case, the effect is like a hare's horn and cannot be produced. So production in all cases is an impossibility. Both cause and effect are relative and therefore causality is only an appearance, not reality.<sup>1</sup>

Motion is impossible. We cannot travel a path which has already been travelled, nor can we travel a path which is not yet travelled. And a path which has neither been travelled nor yet to be travelled, is also not being travelled. The mover does not move; the non-mover of course does not move. What is that third, then, which is neither a mover nor a non-mover, which can move? Hence motion, mover and destination are all unreal. Similarly, the seer, the seen and the sight are also unreal.<sup>2</sup>

The five *skandhas* are also unreal. For example, matter (*Rūpa*) does not exist. If matter exists then

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : I, 7-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II and III.



it can have no cause because it is already existent; and if it does not exist then too it can have no cause because then it is a non-entity like a hare's horn; and uncaused matter is impossible. So matter is unreal. Similarly feeling (*Vedanā*), conception (*Samjñā*), forces (*saṃskāra*), and even individual consciousness (*vijñāna*) are all unreal.<sup>1</sup> The elements of earth, water, fire and air and space are all unreal.<sup>2</sup>

We know only the attributes or qualities, we do not know the substance or the thing. Without attributes we cannot know a substance and without a substance attributes cannot exist. But attributes exist neither in the substance nor outside it. Where, then, can they exist? Substance and attributes are neither the same nor different. Both are therefore relative and unreal. Moreover, production, continuance and destruction can characterize a composite substance (*saṃskṛta*) neither singly nor jointly. Production is impossible because nothing can originate. And if there is no production, how can there be continuance and destruction? They are like an illusion, a dream, a magic city of the Gandharvas. And when they are unreal, a composite substance is also unreal.<sup>3</sup>

The individual self is also unreal. It is neither identical with nor different from the five skandhas. Buddha's teaching is Dependent Origination which is relativity. It is neither eternalism nor nihilism. Therefore neither those who uphold the identity of the individual self and the skandhas nor those who advocate their difference, know the real teaching of the Buddha.<sup>4</sup> If the Ego be the same as the skandhas, then it too, like them will be subject to birth and death; and if the Ego be different from the skandhas, it cannot be known.<sup>5</sup> When the 'I' and the 'Mine' cease to function

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, IV.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, V.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, VII.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, X, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, XVIII, 1.



the entire structure of the universe—subjective as well as objective—crumbles to the ground. The skandhas no more operate. The cycle of birth and death comes to a stand-still.<sup>1</sup>

Buddha said that the universe is beginningless and endless. And it is an accepted canon of logic, urges Nāgārjuna, that if a thing does not exist in the beginning and in the end, it cannot exist in the middle also.<sup>2</sup> Hence beginning, middle and end; birth, persistence and death are all unreal. Not only the universe is beginningless but all objects of intellect are equally beginningless and hence middleless and endless.<sup>3</sup>

Change too is impossible. If the changeless does not exist, then what is it that changes? And if a thing is changeless, how can it change? If Reality does not exist, then what is that which appears? And if it is Reality, how can it be an appearance?<sup>4</sup>

The subject, the object and the subject-object relation are unreal.<sup>5</sup> Action and its result are also unreal. If Action really exists, it will be eternal and actionless. Then all phenomenal practices will collapse. Suffering, actions, bodies, doers, results are all unreal. They are like an illusion, a magic city, a dream, a mirage.<sup>6</sup> Time is also unreal because past, present and future are all relative.<sup>7</sup>

Even the Buddha, the Tathāgata is only an illusion. He is neither identical with nor different from the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, XVIII, 4.

<sup>2</sup> नैवायं नावरं यस्य तस्य मध्यं कुतो भवेत् ? Ibid, XI, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, XI, 8.

<sup>4</sup> कस्य स्यादन्यथाभावः स्वभावश्चेन्न विद्यते ?

कस्य स्यादन्यथाभावः स्वभावो यदि विद्यते ? Ibid, XIII, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, xiv, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, xvii, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, xix.

skandhas. He is really Shūnya. We cannot say whether he exists or does not exist or does both or neither, either after Nirvāṇa or even during lifetime. He transcends all categories of finite thought.<sup>1</sup>

Intellect gives rise to the famous fourteen antinomies which Buddha answered by silence. We cannot say whether the world is finite (antavān) or not or both or neither (1-4). We cannot say whether the world is permanent (shāśhvata) or not or both or neither (5-8). We cannot say whether the Tathāgata, after Nirvāṇa, is existent or not or both or neither (9-12). We cannot say whether matter and mind are identical or not (13-14). These antinomies, says Nāgārjuna, are insoluble by intellect. They are all relative and therefore mere appearances.<sup>2</sup>

The Four Noble Truths are also unreal. There is neither suffering nor its cause nor its cessation nor the way towards its cessation. The Three Jewels are also unreal. There is neither the Order, nor the Religion, nor the Buddha.<sup>3</sup>

Nirvāṇa itself is an illusion. Bondage and release are relative and therefore unreal. Neither the forces nor the ego can be either bound or liberated. Neither that which is the skandhas nor that which is not the skandhas can be either bound or liberated. Neither that which is bound nor that which is unbound nor that which is both nor that which is neither can be either bound or liberated.<sup>4</sup> He who thinks like this: 'Transcending the five skandhas, I shall obtain liberation', is still entangled in the terrible clutches of the skandhas themselves.<sup>5</sup> There is no bondage and consequently no liberation. Both are relative and hence unreal. When neither Samsāra is destroyed nor Nirvāṇa is

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xvi; 4-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, xxv, 21-23.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xvi, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, xxiv.



attained, why should Samsāra and Nirvāṇa be at all imagined.<sup>1</sup>

Again, Nirvāṇa cannot be existence because then, like other existing things, it will be subject to birth and death. And then it will have a cause also and will be based on the Skandhas like all other Samskr̥ta dharmas. Nirvāṇa cannot be non-existence too for then it will not be independent as non-existence necessarily depends upon existence. Nirvāṇa cannot be both existence and non-existence together for the very conception is absurd and self-contradictory. Existence and non-existence are absolutely opposed like light and darkness. How can they exist simultaneously in one place? Again, Nirvāṇa cannot be neither existence nor non-existence for then it will not be conceived at all. Hence if Nirvāṇa is neither existence nor non-existence nor both nor neither, it is only an appearance, not reality.<sup>2</sup>

*Āryadeva*, *Chandrakīrti* and *Shāntideva* also condemn all world-objects to be mere illusions and appearances. But as their arguments are essentially similar to those of Nāgārjuna, it is not desirable to repeat them.

This is the destructive side of the dialectic in Shūnyavāda. But the Shūnyavādin is neither a thorough-going sceptic nor a cheap nihilist who doubts and denies the existence of everything for its own sake or who relishes in shouting that he does not exist. His object is simply to show that all world-objects when taken to be ultimately real, will be found self-contradictory and relative and hence mere appearances. True, he indulges in condemning all phenomena to be like illusions, dreams, mirage, sky-flower, son of a barren woman, magic etc. etc. which suggest that they are something absolutely unreal. But this is not his real object. He indulges in such descriptions simply to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, xvi, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xxv, 4-16.



emphasize the ultimate unreality of all phenomena. He emphatically asserts again and again that he is not a nihilist who advocates absolute negation, that he, on the other hand, maintains the empirical reality of all phenomena. He knows that absolute negation is impossible because it necessarily presupposes affirmation. He only denies the ultimate reality of both affirmation and negation. He condemns intellect from the ultimate standpoint only for he knows that its authority is unquestionable in the empirical world. He wants that we should rise above the categories and the contradictions of the intellect and embrace Reality. He asserts that it is the Real itself which appears. He maintains that Reality is immanent in appearances and yet it transcends them all, that Reality is the Non-dual Absolute, Blissful and beyond intellect, where all plurality is merged. This is the constructive side of the dialectic in Shūnyavāda which we propose to consider now. Here intellect is transformed into Pure Reason, the Harmonious Whole.

The *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* tells us that as long as we are entangled in the categories of the intellect we are like blind-born men completely in the dark; when we reach the limit where finite thought confesses its weakness and points towards Reality our blindness is cured but our vision is still blurred; it is only when we embrace Pure Knowledge of the Buddha that we gain true vision. This is Reality which is Calm and Deep and Pure Knowledge of the Buddha, which transcends intellect and which is to be directly realized through pure reason. It is the Most Excellent and the Final Enlightenment (Uttama Agra Bodhi) by which we become one with the Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

There are six Perfections (Pāramitās) of which the last and the highest is the Supreme or Perfect Wisdom (Prajñā-pāramitā). The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramitā*

<sup>1</sup> *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, p. 134, 29, 39, 116.

declares it to be clear and transparent like the sky, to be devoid of plurality, to be beyond finite thought, Indescribable, Divine Mother, One with the Buddha just as moonlight is one with the Moon, terrible to the fools but most affectionate to the wise, the Seal of the Law, the Light of Existence, the Trumpet of Religion, the Leader of the Doctrine, the Cause of Bliss, and the only Path towards Liberation.<sup>1</sup> It is Reality itself. It is Indescribable and Unthinkable in the sense that intellect fails to describe it adequately. Here the cries of intellect are satisfied and its contradictions reconciled.<sup>2</sup> It is subtler than the subtle, and profounder than the profound.<sup>3</sup> Here all desires and all doubts are set at rest.<sup>4</sup> There are two standpoints—the empirical and the absolute. The former deals with the categories of intellect (Koṭi), with name and form (Nāma-rūpa), with dependence (nimitta), with relativity (Vikalpa or saṅga), with practical compromises (nāma-mātra), with phenomena or appearances (vyavahāra or saṁvṛti); the latter transcends the former and deals with Perfect Wisdom (Prajñā-parāmitā) which is Non-dual (Advaya), Independent (animitta), Real (sāra) and Absolute (Paramārtha).<sup>5</sup> Ultimately it is the Real which appears. The suchness of all dharmas is the suchness of Reality. The phenomenal is the noumenal and the noumenal is the phenomenal. Appearances *are* Reality or the Brahman which at once transcends the duality of the relative and the absolute. They are not diverse, they do not form a duality.<sup>6</sup> It is only from the absolute standpoint that we realize the true nature of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā, pp. 1-3 and 529.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 52-53, 192.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 177, 191, 192, 274, 356, 444.

<sup>6</sup> न सुभूते ! तद्यताविनिर्मुक्तोज्यः कश्चिद् धर्म उपलभ्यते ।  
(p. 453).....सर्वधर्मा नागच्छन्ति न गच्छन्ति न रज्यन्ते न विरज्यन्ते  
असक्ताः सङ्गासङ्गविगताः ब्रह्मभूताः । (pp. 476-477)



But the phenomenal is not to be utterly condemned; intellect need not commit suicide because it is from the phenomenal that we can go to the noumenal, it is from the lower that we can go to the higher. From the empirical viewpoint, the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, Religion, Morality, Doctrine, Truth, Nirvāṇa, nay all the dharmas do exist.<sup>1</sup> We shall rise to the Absolute not by denying the relative but by transcending it with its own help. If a ship capsizes in the sea, those among the crew who catch hold of some small canoe or a piece of wood or a log or even a corpse will reach the shore. But these who will not are sure to be drowned. Similarly those who will take the help of the True Doctrine, of Rational Faith, of the Six Perfections, howsoever phenomenal they may ultimately be, will reach the Absolute, the safe, the immortal and the blissful shore of Nirvāṇa. But those who deny the phenomenal will be surely drowned in it.<sup>2</sup> Just as an old man too weak to stand alone can be taken to the destination by his friends, similarly we who cannot realize the Truth without the help of the intellect, may be helped by our true friends, the Six Perfections.<sup>3</sup> In an unbaked earthen pot we cannot fetch water. If we do so we shall spoil both the pot and the water. The pot will become a lump of mud and the water will become muddy. In order to have clear water we shall have to use a fully baked pot.<sup>4</sup> To transcend the phenomenal we shall have to take the help of the fully mature phenomenal intellect itself. Those who deny it will be themselves destroyed and will destroy others.<sup>5</sup>

The *Laṅkāvatāra* also declares Reality to be Pure Reason which is beyond the categories of the intellect, beyond discrimination (vikalpa) and dualism (dvaita), and which can be directly realized by the Pure Knowledge of the Buddha. Buddhas became Enlightened

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 287-288.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 290-291, 396-397.



by transcending the dualism of the intellect, by realizing the ultimate unreality of all objects (Dharma-nairātmya) and of the subject (Pudgala-nairātmya), by removing the screen of suffering (Kleshāvaraṇa) and of the objects of intellect (Jñeyāvaraṇa). Reality is Silence. From that night when Buddha became Enlightened upto that night when he attained Nirvāṇa, not a single word was uttered by him. The teaching of Buddha is truly beyond language. He who teaches with words merely babbles for Reality is beyond language and intellect.<sup>1</sup> The Buddha is beyond all plurality. And that which is beyond plurality is Reality for it is beyond intellect.<sup>2</sup> A finger is needed to point at the Moon, but the finger itself should not be mistaken for the Moon. Similarly the Absolute is preached through the phenomenal, but the phenomenal should not be mistaken for the Absolute.<sup>3</sup> But ultimately even this distinction is transcended. Appearances *are* Reality. Like saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa, all things are non-dual.<sup>4</sup> Reality is not to be sought for apart from phenomena. Shūnyavāda is not nihilism. True, the Astasāhasrikā says that even if the Buddha, the Perfectly Enlightened shouts at the top of his voice for aeons and aeons innumerable like the sand-particles of the Gangā that 'a thing exists', 'a thing exists', there certainly can be no 'thing' that has had or has or will have an origination nor can there be a 'thing' that has had or has or will have a cessation.<sup>5</sup> But this should not be understood in the sense of utter negation. It only means, as the Lankāvatāra says,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> यां च रात्रिं तथागतोऽभिसम्बुद्धो यां च रात्रिं परिनिर्वास्यति अत्रान्तरे एकमप्यक्षरं तथागतेन नोदाहृतं न प्रव्याहुरिष्यति, श्रवचनं बुद्धवचनम् ।  
.....योऽक्षरपतितं धर्मं देशयति स प्रलपति निरक्षरत्वं द धर्मस्य ।  
Lankāvatāra, pp. 142-143, 194.

<sup>2</sup> यत्सर्वप्रपञ्चातीतं स तथागतः । Ibid, p. 190

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 223-224.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> Astasāhasrikā, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> बुद्ध्या विविच्यमानानां स्वभावो नावधार्यते ।

तस्मादनभिलाष्यास्ते निःस्वभावाश्च देशिताः ॥ Lankāvatāra, p. 116.

that all things are unoriginated and are indescribable because they can be described neither as existent nor as non-existent nor as both nor as neither. They are merely relative and so ultimately unreal. Shūnya, therefore, is not merely negative. It is far better to entertain, from the empirical standpoint, an idea of Existence or Affirmation, as big in magnitude as the Sumeru mountain, than to understand by 'Shūnyatā' a 'mere nothing'. One who maintains in a self-contradictory manner the existence of a 'mere nothing' is a self-condemned nihilist.<sup>1</sup> Of the seven kinds of Shūnyatā, mere negation is the worst (sarva-jaghanyā). The best is the *Paramārthāryajñānamahāshūnyatā* which is the Absolute itself that can be realized by Pure Reason and which is the result of the knowledge that all things are essentially inexpressible (sarvadharmānirabhilāpya-shūnyatā).<sup>2</sup> Existence and non-existence, purity and impurity etc. etc., says the *Samādhirāja Sūtra*, are the cries of intellect. The 'Middle Path' avoids the errors of both these extremes and at once transcends the extremes as well as the middle.<sup>3</sup>

The practical way by which the intellect may be transformed into Pure Reason is indicated by four Meditations (Dhyāna), three Samādhis, and ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. In the first *Meditation*, there is the working of intellect (savitarka, savichāra) and there is pleasure (Prīti, sukha). In the second, intellect is in the process of giving place to Reason (Avitarka, Avichāra) and pleasure to higher happiness (Samādhija-Prīti-Sukha, Ātma-samprasāda). In the third, intellect ceases (avichāra) and pleasure ends (Niṣprītika) and there is only higher happiness (sukha-vihāra). In the fourth, intellect becomes one with Reason, pain and

<sup>1</sup> वरं खलु सुमेरुमात्रा पुद्गलदृष्टिं न त्वेव नास्त्यस्तित्वाभिमानिकस्य शून्यतादृष्टिः ।.....स हि वैनाशिको भवति । Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> तस्मादुभे अन्त विवर्जयित्वा मध्ये पि स्थानं न करोति पण्डितः ।

Samādhirāja, p. 30.



pleasure are transcended (*aduhkhāsukha*) and this yields a sort of unique bliss (*vihāra*).<sup>1</sup> In the first *Samādhi* (*Shūnyatā-Samādhi*) we know that the phenomenal is devoid of ultimate reality (*Svabhāva-shūnya*) and that Reality is devoid of plurality (*Prapañcha-shūnya*). In the second (*Ānimitta-samādhi*) we know the real cause of everything, we know that it is the Real itself which appears. In the third (*Apraṇihita-samādhi*) we directly embrace Reality which transcends the categories of the intellect.<sup>2</sup> In the first *Stage* (*Pramuditā*) a Bodhi-sattva, realizing the inability of intellect, begins with great pleasure, his quest for true knowledge. In the second (*Vimalā*) he acquires the ten noble deeds. In the third (*Prābhākari*) he knows the subject-object duality and the categories of intellect to be unreal. In the fourth (*Archiṣmatī*) all doubts and cries of intellect are set at rest. In the fifth (*Sudurjayā*) he understands the empirical and the absolute points of view. In the sixth (*Ābhimukhī*) the Ego is conquered and Dependent Origination is fully understood. In the seventh (*Dūraṅgamā*) *Shūnyatā* in its double aspects is fully realized. In the eighth (*Achalā*) absolute non-duality of appearances and Reality is realized. In the ninth (*Sādhumatī*) constant contact with Reality is attained. And in the tenth (*Dharma-meghā*) he becomes one with Pure Reason, the Absolute and like an heir-apparent is consecrated with 'Pure Knowledge'.<sup>3</sup> He then defers his *Nirvāṇa* in order to liberate others. He carries the suffering humanity in the Great Ship of the True Doctrine from the stormy sea of birth-and-death to the eternal and blissful shore of *Nirvāṇa*.<sup>4</sup> He makes the people burning with suffering cool by the showers of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> He blows the Trumpet of the True Law and the Conch of the True Doctrine;

<sup>1</sup> *Shatasāhasrikā*, p. 1443; *Lalitaviṣṭara*, pp. 129 and 343.

<sup>2</sup> *Shatasāhasrikā*, pp. 1439-1440.

<sup>3</sup> *Dashabhūmika-sūtra*, pp. 25-86.

<sup>4</sup> *Lalitaviṣṭara*, p. 216. *Rāṣṭrapāla-pariprechhā*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45.

he lights the Torch of the Divine Truth and rains the showers of the Sacred Religion.<sup>1</sup> If one does not understand the truth, it is his fault, not the fault of the teacher, nor of the doctrine, just as if a patient does not take the medicine, it is his fault, not the fault of the doctor nor of the medicine.<sup>2</sup>

*Nāgārjuna* defines Reality (Tattva) as that which can only be directly realized, that which is Calm and Blissful, that where all plurality is merged, that where all cries of intellect are satisfied, that which is a Non-dual Harmonious Whole.<sup>3</sup> Buddha's teaching relates to two aspects of Truth—the empirical and the absolute. The first is *Samvṛti* or *Vyavahāra*; the second is *Paramārtha*. Those who do not know these two standpoints cannot understand the teaching of the Buddha.<sup>4</sup> *Samvṛti* is a sort of covering. It hides the real truth. It is a workable reality, a practical makeshift, a necessary compromise. In the end it is no truth at all. But this can be realized from the absolute standpoint only. Though this distinction is a distinction within and by finite thought itself, yet it has got to be transcended. Intellect must be transformed into Reason. But this distinction is quite valid in phenomenal sphere. The empirical cannot be condemned by its own logic. A dreamer, while he is dreaming, cannot condemn his own dream. Pure negation is an impossibility. It necessarily pre-supposes affirmation. Even an illusion, a mirage, a dream, a reflection, as such *exists*. Appear-

<sup>1</sup> *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Samādhirāja*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> अपरप्रत्ययं शान्तं प्रपञ्चैरुपपञ्चितम् ।  
निर्विकल्पमनानार्यमेतत् तत्त्वस्य लक्षणम् ॥

*Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, xviii, 9.

<sup>4</sup> द्वे सत्ये समुपाश्रित्य बुद्धानां धर्मदेशना ।

लोकसंवृत्तिसत्यं च सत्यं च परमार्थतः ॥

यज्जयोनें विजानन्ति विभ्रातां सत्ययोद्धोः ।

ते तत्त्वं न विजानन्ति गम्भीरं बुद्धशासने ॥ *Ibid*, xxiv, 8-9.



ances are not to be utterly condemned because it is only through the lower that we can go to the higher.

Nāgārjuna explains the meaning of Shūnyatā. It also has a double aspect. In the realm of the phenomenal it means Svabhāva-shūnyatā or Nissvabhāvatā. It means that appearances are devoid of ultimate reality. It is Pratītya-samutpāda or Relativity. It means that everything that can be grasped by the intellect is necessarily relative. It is the Madhyama-mārga or the Middle Path between affirmation and negation—a Path which ultimately transcends both.<sup>1</sup> The twelve-linked Wheel of Causation beginning with Ignorance and ending with Decay and Death will go on revolving unless and until its root-cause, Ignorance, is destroyed. And this can be destroyed by knowledge alone.<sup>2</sup> This knowledge is the knowledge of Reality. Shūnyatā, in its second aspect, is therefore Reality itself wherein all plurality is merged, all categories of intellect are reconciled.<sup>3</sup> Absolutely speaking Reality is neither Shūnya nor Ashūnya nor both nor neither. It is called Shūnya only from the empirical standpoint.<sup>4</sup> In the phenomenal, Relativity reigns supreme. What is not relative is for intellect as good as nothing. But it does not mean that we should take Relativity itself as the final truth. To do so is to refuse to rise above the phenomenal. Relativity itself is relative. It is related to the Absolute without which it loses all meaning. The Buddhas have preached Shūnyatā in order to enable us to rise above all the entangling categories of the intellect. Those who take Shūnyatā in the sense of any category of intellect, in the sense of affirmation or negation or both or neither are incorrigible and hopeless

<sup>1</sup> यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादः शून्यतां तां प्रचक्षते ।

सा प्रज्ञप्तिरुपादाय प्रतिपत् सर्व मध्यमा ॥ Ibid, xxiv, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xxvi, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, xviii, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xli, 11.

and are destined to doom.<sup>1</sup> Chandrakīrti quotes Ratnakūṭa-Sūtra to the effect: A doctor administers a very strong purgative to a patient of constipation. Now, that purgative, after throwing all impurities out of the abdomen, should itself also come out. If that strong purgative does not itself come out but remains in the abdomen, do you think, O Kāshyapa, that that person is cured?<sup>2</sup> Shūnyatā, if wrongly understood in the sense of any category of intellect, will surely sound the philosophical death-knell of the person who misunderstands it, just as a snake, if carelessly caught, will bite the person who catches it and will kill him by its poison or just as wrong knowledge may create havoc or tantra, if wrongly practised, will destroy the person who practises it.<sup>3</sup> Knowing that Shūnyatā cannot be easily grasped, the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, became silent and uninclined towards teaching.<sup>4</sup> But if rightly understood Shūnyatā itself is Nirvāṇa.

People, says Nāgārjuna, not understanding the meaning of Shūnya, accuse us of nihilism. Taking Shūnya in the sense of mere negation they urge that we have negated all phenomena, that we have utterly denied the Four Noble Truths, the Bondage and Liberation, the Order, the Religion and even the Buddha, and that we have logically no room even for practical compromises.<sup>5</sup> We reply: These people do not understand even the meaning of Shūnyatā much less its real significance. Misunderstanding Shūnyatā in the sense of mere negation, they wrongly criticise it and charge us with defects which our doctrine does not possess.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> शून्यता सर्वदृष्टीनां प्रोक्ता निःसरणं जितैः ।

येषां तु शून्यतादृष्टिस्तानसाध्यान् बभाषिरे ॥ Ibid, xiii, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Mādhyamika-Vṛtti, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> विनाशयति दुदृष्टा शून्यता मन्दमेवसम् ।

सर्पो यथा दुग्ं हीतो विद्या वा दुष्प्रसाधिता ॥

Mādhyamika-Kārikā, xxiv, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xxiv, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, xxiv, 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, xxiv, 7 & 13.



If everything is Ashūnya, then it must exist independently and must be absolutely real. Then there should be no dependent origination and hence no production, no destruction, no bondage, no liberation, no Noble Truths, no Order, no Religion and no Buddha. Everything being real, it should be eternal and motionless. Then there should be no change, no motion, no world. Thus those who maintain the absolute reality of world-objects undermine the distinction between the relative and the absolute with the result that they lose even the phenomenal. They deny Dependent Origination and by denying Relativity they negate all phenomena and all worldly practices.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if everything is Shūnya in the sense of absolute negation, then the world cannot be called even an appearance. Verily the hare's horn does not even appear. Absolute negation is an impossibility. It must logically pre-suppose affirmation. Again, if everything is Shūnya in the sense of being relative then too there is no production, no destruction, no bondage and no liberation.<sup>2</sup> This view is also one-sided because Relativity itself is relative; it is related to the Absolute without which it becomes meaningless.

We, the Shūnyavādins, take Shūnyatā in its double aspects. We know that phenomena are essentially relative and therefore ultimately unreal, and we also know that Reality is the Non-dual Absolute where all plurality is merged. Therefore we alone, and not our opponents, can truly understand and explain the reality and the worth of all appearances together with their intellectual, ethical and religious implications. It is we, who know that Relativity reigns supreme in the phenomenal world, who can realise the true significance of Dependent Origination and of the four Noble Truths.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> सर्वसंख्यवहाराच्च लोकिकान् प्रतिवाचसे ।

यत्प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादशून्यतां प्रतिवाचसे ॥ Ibid, xxiv, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xxv, 1.

<sup>3</sup> यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादं पश्यतीदं स पश्यति ।

दुःखं समुदयं चैव निरोधं मार्गमेव च ॥ Ibid, xxiv, 40.

In his *Vigraha-Vyāvartini*, Nāgārjuna gives the anticipated objections of the opponents against Shūnyatā and then refutes all of them. The arguments of the opponents are :—

(1) *Shūnyatā* which denies the existence of all *dharma*s is not true :

- (a) Because the arguments used for the *existence* of Shūnyatā are also unreal ;
- (b) And if they are not unreal, they undermine the the Shūnyavādin's premises for then he at least maintains the *reality* of his arguments ;
- (c) And Shūnyavāda has no *pramāṇa* to establish itself.

Nāgārjuna replies :—

(1) Shūnyatā which denies the ultimate reality of all *dharma*s is true :

- (a) Because the ultimate unreality of words and arguments does not render Shūnyatā unreal. By Shūnyatā we do not mean mere negation ; by it we mean Dependent Origination or Relativity.<sup>1</sup>
- (b) Our arguments do not undermine our premises. We do not say : This particular argument of ours is true while all others are false. We say : All arguments are ultimately unreal.<sup>2</sup> Absolutely speaking we have no thesis to prove and hence no words and no arguments. How can we be charged with defects then ? But from the empirical standpoint we admit the reality of arguments

<sup>1</sup> *Vigraha-Vyāvartini*, Kārikā, 22, 67.

<sup>2</sup> यदि हि वयं ब्रूमः इदं वचनमशून्यं शेषाः सर्वभावाः शून्या इति ततो वैयमिकत्वं स्यात् । न चैतदेवम् ।



because the phenomenal cannot be condemned by its own logic.<sup>1</sup>

- (c) The validity of *Pramāṇas* themselves cannot be established. A *pramāṇa*, like fire, cannot prove itself. If fire can enlighten itself, it will also burn itself. If fire can enlighten itself and other objects, then surely darkness too will cover itself and other objects. A *pramāṇa* cannot be established by another *pramāṇa* for it will lead to infinite regress. A *pramāṇa* cannot be proved by a *prameya*. The opponent admits that a *prameya* is to be proved by *pramāṇas*. If he now admits that *prameyas*, in their turn, are to be proved by *pramāṇas*, his argument amounts to this laughable position : a father produces a son ; now that son in his turn, should produce his own father. And of course a *pramāṇa* cannot be proved at random. The validity of *pramāṇas*, therefore, can be established neither by themselves nor by other *pramāṇas* nor by *prameyas* nor by accident.<sup>2</sup>

Reality is above refutation and non-refutation. We do not negate anything. There is nothing which can be negated. Even the charge that the *Shūnyavādin* negates everything is made by our opponent. We, however, go beyond affirmation and negation.<sup>3</sup>

In his *Ratnāvalī*, *Nāgārjuna* says that just as a learned grammarian may teach even the alphabets, similarly Buddha taught according to the capacities of his followers.<sup>4</sup> To the ordinary people he taught affirmation so that they may avoid all evil deeds. To the mediocres

<sup>1</sup> न वयं व्यवहारसत्यं प्रत्याख्याय कथयामः शून्याः सर्वभावा इति ।

*Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, K. 32-52.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, K. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ratnāvalī*, iv, 94.

he taught negation so that they may realize the unreality of the ego. Both these are based on duality. To the best he taught the blissful Shūnya, the deeper truth, terrible to the fools but kind to the wise.<sup>1</sup> Nāgārjuna condemns nihilism (nāstikya) by saying that negation leads to hell ; affirmation leads to heaven ; and non-dual truth which transcends affirmation and negation leads to liberation.<sup>2</sup> This Pure Knowledge where affirmation and negation, good and evil, heaven and hell are merged, is called Liberation by the wise.<sup>3</sup> From the absolute standpoint we have no thesis, no morality, no intellect, because they are all grounded in Pure Reason (Bodhi), the Reality. How can we be condemned as nihilists then ?<sup>4</sup> Negation is possible only as a destruction or as an antithesis of affirmation. But when there is no affirmation, how can there be any negation ?<sup>5</sup> Synthesis alone is real. Both thesis and antithesis are appearances. The universe therefore is neither real nor unreal, and hence only an appearance.<sup>6</sup> Please ask the Sāṅkhyas, the Vaiśeṣikas, the Jainas, the Soul-upholders and the Skandhavādins whether they declare the world as 'neither existent nor non-existent'.<sup>7</sup> The Real transcends all categories of intellect and the phenomenal is 'neither real nor unreal'—this is the noble Present of our Religion, the Deep Truth, the Nectar of the Teaching of the Buddha.<sup>8</sup>

What is called the phenomenal world or the cycle of birth and death, from the empirical standpoint, viewed through the glasses of Causation and Relativity, that

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, iv, 95-96.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, i, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, i, 57.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, i, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, i, 45.

<sup>6</sup> इति सत्यानुतातीतो लोकोऽयं परमार्थतः । Ibid, ii, 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> ससांख्यौलूक्यनिग्रन्थपुद्गलस्कन्धवादिनम् ।

पृच्छ लोकं यदि वदत्यस्तिनास्तिव्यतिक्रमम् ॥ Ibid, i, 61.

<sup>8</sup> धर्मयौतकमित्यस्मान् नास्त्यस्तिव्यतिक्रमम् ।

विद्धि गम्भीरमित्युक्तं बुद्धानां शासनामृतम् ॥ Ibid, i, 62.



very world is called Nirvāṇa or the Absolute, from the ultimate standpoint, viewed without Causation and Relativity.<sup>1</sup> Bondage, viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, is Liberation. The Absolute is its appearances. There is not the slightest difference between Samsāra and Nirvāṇa.<sup>2</sup> Those who want to bring the non-plural non-dual Buddha within the four categories of the intellect cannot realise the Tathāgata, entangled as they are in the meshes of plurality.<sup>3</sup> The essential nature of all objects, like Nirvāṇa, is beyond production and destruction. When this truth is realized, the subject-object duality is transcended and the cries of intellect are satisfied. Intellect is transformed into Reason. Philosophy is equated with silence.<sup>4</sup> From the absolute standpoint, to no person, at no place, no doctrine was ever taught by the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> He, out of compassion for all beings, descended to the phenomenal level and preached the truth in order to enable us to rise above all the categories of the intellect, to shake off all plurality and to directly realize Reality.<sup>6</sup> Reality cannot be realized by negating appearances. We can rise to the higher only through the lower. We cannot give even an idea of the Absolute without the help of the phenomenal. And if we know nothing about the Absolute, how can we try to realize it ?<sup>7</sup> Thus it is that he who

<sup>1</sup> य आजबंजवीभाव उपादाय प्रतीत्यवा ।

सोऽप्रतीत्यानुपादाय निर्वाणमुपदिश्यते ॥

Mādhyamika-Kārikā, xxv, 9.

<sup>2</sup> निर्वाणस्य च या कोटिः कोटिः संसरणस्य च ।

न तयोरन्तरं किञ्चित् सुसूक्ष्ममपि विद्यते ॥ Ibid, xxv, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, xxii, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xviii, 7.

<sup>5</sup> सर्वोपलम्भोपशमः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवः ।

न क्वचित् कस्यचित् कश्चिद् धर्मो बुद्धेन देशितः ॥ Ibid, xxv, 24.

<sup>6</sup> सर्वदृष्टिप्रहाणाय यः सद्धर्ममदेशयत् ।

अनुकम्पामुपादाय तं नमस्यामि गौतमम् ॥ Ibid, xxvii, 30.

<sup>7</sup> व्यवहारमनाश्रित्य परमार्थो न देश्यते ।

परमार्थमनागम्य निर्वाणं नाधिगम्यते ॥ Ibid, xxiv, 10.

has realized the truth of Shūnyatā, realizes the meaning and significance of everything and can explain everything. On the other hand he who has not realized the truth of Shūnyatā, fails to realize the meaning and significance of anything and can explain nothing.<sup>1</sup>

Āryadeva says that the world is like a moving fire-brand, a magical creation, a dream, an illusion, a reflection, an echo, a mirage, a passing cloud.<sup>2</sup> But he also preserves the empirical reality of all phenomena. Egoism, he says, is far better than nihilism. Our doctrine is not nihilism. Nihilism trembles with fear even at the very name of our doctrine.<sup>3</sup> It is true Nairātmya as it transcends the empirical ego. It is terrible to the false notions. It is non-dual and blissful. It can be realized only by the Buddhas.<sup>4</sup> However it can be preached only from the phenomenal standpoint. One can explain a thing to a *Mlechchha* only when one speaks his language. Similarly one can explain Reality only when one descends to the common level.<sup>5</sup> Reality transcends intellect and he who seeks to prove neither existence nor non-existence nor both can never be refuted.<sup>6</sup>

Reality, according to Āryadeva is the Pure Self (Chitta). In its real nature, it is above discrimination, is absolutely pure, unoriginated, uncontaminated, and

<sup>1</sup> सर्वं च युज्यते तस्य शून्यता यस्य युज्यते ।

सर्वं न युज्यते तस्य शून्यं यस्य न युज्यते ॥ Ibid, xxiv, 14.

Vigrahavyāvartini, K. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Chatuḥshataka, Verse, 325.

<sup>3</sup> अहङ्कारोऽसतः श्रेयान् न तु नैरात्म्यदर्शनम् । Ibid, 287.

अस्य धर्मस्य नाम्नोऽपि भयमुत्पद्यतेऽसतः ॥ Ibid, 289.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 288.

<sup>5</sup> नान्यथा भाषया म्लेच्छः शक्यो ग्राहयितुं यथा ।

न लौकिकमृते लोकः शक्यो ग्राहयितुं तथा ॥ Ibid, 194.

<sup>6</sup> सदसत्सदसच्चेति यस्य पक्षो न विद्यते ।

उपालम्भविचरेणापि तस्य वक्तुं न शक्यते ॥ Ibid, 400.



self-luminous. On account of ignorance it appears as intellect, even as a white marble appears as coloured on account of a coloured object placed near it. The Jewel of Self appears to be fouled with the mud of Ignorance. A wise person should at once busy himself with clearing of this mud instead of increasing it.<sup>1</sup> Ignorance (Avidyā) is error (bhrānti). Just as when 'shell' is known the 'shell-silver' vanishes, when 'rope' is known the 'rope-snake' vanishes, similarly when knowledge dawns ignorance vanishes.<sup>2</sup>

Chandrakīrti fully supports and explains Nāgārjuna. The Prāsangika-Mādhyamika school of Buddhapālita which condemns logic is upheld by Chandrakīrti against the Svatantra-Mādhyamika School of Bhāvaviveka which wants to support Shūnyavāda by independent reasoning.<sup>3</sup> Chandrakīrti says that for him who accepts the ultimate validity of logic Mādhyamika system is a hinderance rather than a help.<sup>4</sup> Logic has only a negative value for us. We only refute the theory of our opponent without, however, accepting the converse view. Our words are not policemen. They cannot arrest us. They simply enable us to express something.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately every argument is either unreal (asiddha) or self-contradictory (viruddha). But then, urges the opponent, is not this very argument, being an argument, ultimately unreal or self-contradictory? Chandrakīrti replies: this objection is valid only against those who give an independent status to reasoning. For us logic has only phenomenal validity. We simply repudiate the arguments of our opponents. We have no thesis of our own to prove. We are not positively proving that

<sup>1</sup> प्रकृत्या कल्पनारामे विविक्तं चित्तरत्नम् ।

आदिशुद्धमनुत्पन्नं निजरूपमनाधिलम् ॥

Chittavishuddhi-prakaraṇa, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 66-88.

<sup>3</sup> Mādhyamika-Vṛtti, pp. 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

every argument is either unreal or self-contradictory for the simple reason that we cannot do so. We accept the empirical reality of logic but it is a reality which ultimately undermines itself. From the absolute point of view Reality is silence. But we descend to the phenomenal and point out to our opponent that his thesis cannot be supported even by his own logic. We have no thesis of our own. We only demonstrate negatively that every argument is ultimately unreal because self-contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

The objection of our opponent is based on a confusion between the two standpoints we have repeatedly advocated. From the absolute standpoint we have no thesis to prove, no belief to uphold, no assertion to maintain, simply because Reality is beyond all duality, beyond all theses and anti-theses, beyond all belief and doubt, beyond all assertion and denial. We do not maintain any belief for the simple reason that we do not have any doubt. Belief and doubt are correlatives. One is the thesis; the other is antithesis. One is impossible without the other. And because we do not have any doubt, we cannot have any belief. What should we then try to support by arguments? Why should we enquire into the number, definition, and object of Pramāṇas? We transcend all cries of finite thought.<sup>2</sup> From the absolute standpoint we cannot say whether we believe or do not believe in arguments. How can we utter even a word? Ultimately silence is the highest philosophy. Reality cannot tolerate any plurality or duality.<sup>3</sup> When saints preach Reality, they do not put forward their own arguments.

<sup>1</sup> स्वतन्त्रमनुमानं ब्रुवतामयं दोषो जायते । न वयं स्वतन्त्रमनुमानं प्रयुज्महे, परप्रतिज्ञानिवेषफलत्वादस्मदनुमानानाम् । Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 53-57.

<sup>3</sup> परमार्थो ह्यार्याणां तूष्णीभावः । ..... कुतस्तत्र प्रपञ्चसम्भवः ? Ibid, p. 57.

कुतस्तत्र परमार्थं वाचां प्रवृत्तिः ? Ibid, p. 493.



They simply resort to intellect as a practical necessity and make others understand by common arguments and methods that Reality is beyond all the categories of intellect.<sup>1</sup>

Chandrakīrti vehemently criticizes the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda School of Dīnnāga. He says that the efforts of the Buddhist logicians to improve on the Naiyāyikas are futile. Logic has, after all, only phenomenal reality. If the cognition of objects depends upon the Means of Cognition (Pramāṇa), then upon what do these pramāṇas themselves depend? Nāgārjuna has made it clear in his Vigrahavyāvartīnī that a Pramāṇa can be established neither by itself nor by any other Pramāṇa nor by Prameya nor at random.<sup>2</sup>

Dīnnāga maintains that knowledge is the result of constructive thought and pure sensation. Words are relational and so they can give us only the universal (sāmānya), not the Real which is a unique momentary particular or a thing-in-itself (svalakṣaṇa) which can be realized by self-consciousness (svasamvitti). It is the indescribable Real. Chandrakīrti points out that the Sva-lakṣaṇa cannot be self-conscious. He quotes a passage from the Ratnachūḍa-paripṛcchā to the effect that consciousness cannot apprehend itself just as the edge of a sword cannot cut itself or the tip of a finger cannot touch itself.<sup>3</sup> Both subject and object are relative and therefore ultimately unreal. If fire can enlighten itself it will equally burn itself. Again, the Sva-lakṣaṇa cannot be called indescribable (avāchya). It is not like our Shūnya. For us Reality is indescribable because no category of intellect can adequately describe it. Intellect always proceeds with dichotomy and is

<sup>1</sup> न सत्त्वार्था लोकसंबन्धवहारेणोपपत्तिं वर्णयन्ति । किन्तु लोके एव वा प्रसिद्धोपपत्तिस्तौ परावबोधार्थं अभ्युपेत्य तथैव लोकं बोधयन्ति ।

Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

forced to land in antinomies. Ultimately both the thesis and the antithesis are unreal. Dinnāga wants that both should be viewed as indescribable and this is impossible.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Svalakṣaṇa cannot be regarded as an absolute reality. It is as relative as any universal. In fact, it involves a double relation, that of sense and thought, and that of 'in itself' and 'not in-itself'. A 'thing-in-itself' loses all meaning unless it is contrasted with a thing which is 'not in-itself'. Both Svalakṣaṇa and Sāmānyalakṣaṇa are correlatives. And what is relative is only an appearance, not Reality.<sup>2</sup> Although Dinnāga apparently accepts the distinction between the phenomenal and the absolute by admitting the absolute reality of the Svalakṣaṇa, yet really he is undermining this distinction by his transcendental logic. His Svalakṣaṇa is not absolute but only relative and hence Dinnāga does not have even the phenomenal reality because without an Absolute, the phenomenal itself ceases to be phenomenal. This distinction is fundamental and it must be maintained otherwise we lose even the phenomenal.<sup>3</sup>

From the absolute standpoint we declare the phenomenal to be a mere appearance but by doing so we do not undermine its empirical reality. Even the Buddha has preached his doctrine from the phenomenal point of view according to our common logic.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately there is neither Saṃsāra nor Nirvāṇa. When there is no Saṃsāra how can it be destroyed? The non-existent 'snake' wrongly superimposed on a 'rope' in darkness is not destroyed when in light we recognise the thing to be only a rope.<sup>5</sup> Shūnyatā is taught to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 66-68.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 67-68-69.

<sup>4</sup> लौकिक एव दर्शने स्थित्वा बुद्धानां भगवतां धर्मदेशना । Ibid, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> वस्तुचिन्तायां तु संसार एव नास्ति । तत् कुतोऽस्य परिक्षयः प्रदीपावस्थायां रज्जुरगपरिक्षयवत् ? Ibid, p. 220.



enable us to rise above all categories. If some one wrongly understands Shūnyatā in the sense of a category his case is hopeless. If a seller says to a buyer: "I shall sell nothing to you", and that buyer replies: "Please sell to me this 'nothing'", how can that foolish buyer be convinced about that 'nothing'?

We are not nihilists, says Chandrakīrti, because our doctrine transcends both affirmation and negation. We show the non-dual path which leads to the blissful city of Nirvāṇa. We do not deny empirical reality to phenomena; we simply say that they are ultimately unreal.<sup>2</sup> Suppose a person has committed theft. Now a man, not knowing this, gives evidence, simply prompted by the enemies of the thief, before a court that that person is the thief. Another man who caught the thief *flagrante delicto* also gives evidence to the same effect. The evidence in both cases is the same. But the former man is a liar even though he has unintentionally spoken the truth, while the latter man is truthful because he knows and has intentionally told the truth. The difference between the nihilist and the Mādhyamika is the difference between the former and the latter.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the nihilist, in a self-contradictory manner, denies everything, while the Mādhyamika admits the empirical reality of everything.<sup>4</sup> It is only from the absolute standpoint that he declares the phenomenal to be unreal. Thus his doctrine transcends affirmation as well as negation. Shūnyatā, from this standpoint, because it is devoid of all plurality, is Nirvāṇa itself.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 247-248.

<sup>2</sup> न वयं नास्तिकाः । अस्तित्वनास्तित्वद्वयबाधनिरासेन तु वयं निर्वाणपुर-  
गाभिन्मद्वयपक्षं विद्योतयामः । न च कर्मकर्तृफलप्रदिकं नास्त्येति वूमः,  
किं तद्धि, निःस्वभावमेतदिति व्यवस्थापयामः । Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 368.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 368.

<sup>5</sup> शून्यतैव सर्वप्रपञ्चनिवृत्तिलक्षणत्वान् निर्वाणमित्युच्यते ।

Ibid, p. 351.

Reality is non-dual, blissful, beyond plurality and finite thought. It can only be directly realized. But it cannot be realized by denying the phenomenal which must be accepted as a practical necessity. Just as a person who desires to fetch water must have some vessel, similarly he who wants to rise to Nirvāṇa must accept the phenomenal as relatively real.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately there are no degrees of truth and Reality. But phenomenally they exist. Chandrakīrti compares phenomena to a stair-case in which each step is higher—through which we reach the Palace of Reality.<sup>2</sup>

Samvṛti is 'covering'. It hides the real nature of all things. It also means dependent origination (paraspara-sambhavana) or relativity. It is a practical reality (saṃketa).<sup>3</sup> It is ignorance (avidyā) or delusion (moha) which covers Reality and gives a false view.<sup>4</sup> The true aspect is Reality; the false is appearance. A man of defective vision sees hair floating in the atmosphere. But his experience cannot contradict the true experience of persons of good vision who see no hair. Similarly phenomenal intellect cannot contradict Pure Reason.<sup>5</sup> The empirical truth is only a means (upāya); the absolute truth is the end (upeya).<sup>6</sup> Chandrakīrti further distinguishes two aspects in the phenomenal reality itself—that which is phenomenally true (Tathya-samvṛti) and that which is phenomenally false (Mithyā-samvṛti). When people with rightly functioning sense-organs, recognize things as real, those things are phenomenally true, and those things which are perceived

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> तत्त्वावतारसोपानभूतत्वात् प्रवृत्त्युपदेशोऽपि कर्तव्यः ।

Chatuḥshataka-Vṛtti, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> समन्ताद् वरणं संवृतिः । अज्ञानं हि संवृतिरित्युच्यते । परस्परसम्भवनं वा संवृतिरन्योन्यसमाश्रयेण । अथवा संवृतिः संकेतो लोकव्यवहारः । Ibid, p. 492.

<sup>4</sup> Mādhyamakāvatāra as quoted in Bodhicaryā-vatārapañjikā, 353.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 369.

<sup>6</sup> उपायभूतं व्यवहारसत्यमुपेयभूतं परमार्थसत्यम् । Ibid, p. 372.



when the sense-organs are not properly functioning, e.g., things in a dream, a mirage, hair in the atmosphere, double-Moon etc., are phenomenally false.<sup>1</sup> Thus Chandrakīrti recognizes the Parikalpita and the Paratantra of the Yogācāras under Saṃvṛti satya itself. Ultimately however, everything phenomenal, because relative, is unreal. From this standpoint Reality is equated with silence. But because the distinction between the phenomenal and the absolute is itself not absolute. Reality from the phenomenal standpoint is heard and preached.<sup>2</sup>

In much-inspired verses of his *Bodhicharyāvatāra*, *Shāntideva*, the last great philosopher of Shūnyavāda, praises the *Bodhi-chitta* or the True self which is Pure Consciousness. He who wants to overcome the manifold miseries of this world, who wants to remove the innumerable sufferings of all beings, and who wants to enjoy immeasurable happiness, should never cease to direct his thought towards Supreme Enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> The realization of the True Self which is Pure Knowledge can at once turn an impure mortal into the Pure Buddha.<sup>4</sup> We should translate into practice what we read. Mere reading is insufficient. A patient will not be cured if he does not take the medicine but simply reads the prescription.<sup>5</sup> When all other beings, like myself, like happiness and hate fear and pain, then what is the difference between my 'ego' and their 'ego' that I should protect myself and not others.<sup>6</sup> We must defer our Nirvāṇa for the sake of the liberation of other beings. If we are ready to sacrifice everything for the benefit of humanity, if we earnestly work for

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> अनशरस्य धर्मस्य श्रुतिः का देशना च का ।

श्रूयते देश्यते चापि समारोपादनशरः ॥

Quoted in Mādhyamika-Vṛtti, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> Bodhicharyāvatāra, i, 8.

<sup>4</sup> अशुचिप्रतिमामिमां गृहीत्वा जिनरत्नप्रतिमां करोत्यनर्घाम् । Ibid, i, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, v, 109.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, viii, 95-96.

the salvation of all beings, then oceans of bliss will flow for us which will far excell the so-called pleasure of selfish and individual liberation.<sup>1</sup>

Truth has got two aspects—the conditional and the absolute. The Absolute is the Reason which is beyond finite intellect and the conditional is the finite intellect itself.<sup>2</sup> The conditional is contradicted by the absolute, but not *vice-versa*. Even among the philosopher-saints there are degrees. The higher sublate the lower. These degrees represent different stages in the development from intellect to Reason.<sup>3</sup>

We deny only the ultimate reality, not the relative existence, of phenomena. But we do not stop here. Afterwards we transcend even Relativity itself. By transcending Relativity we transcend intellect itself. When there is neither affirmation nor negation, then intellect, finding no categories for its support, merges in the Absolute.<sup>4</sup> Buddha has taught his doctrine to enable us to overcome all suffering and thus to become real *Bhikṣus* (*Bhinnaklesho Bhikṣuḥ*) and obtain Nirvāṇa. But as long as the duality of the subject and the object is not transcended, neither *Bhikṣutā* nor Nirvāṇa can be realized.<sup>5</sup> Ignorance is of two kinds: Ignorance due to suffering (*kleshāvaraṇa*), and Ignorance due to objects (*Jñeyāvaraṇa*). *Shūnyatā* is the antithesis of Ignorance of both kinds. It is Pure Knowledge. Why should one fear *Shūnyatā* which really removes all fears?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, viii, 108.

<sup>2</sup> संवृतिः परमार्थश्च सत्यद्वयमिदं मतम् ।  
बुद्धेरगोचरस्तत्त्वं बुद्धिः संवृतिरुच्यते ॥ Ibid, ix, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, ix, 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, ix, 33, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>6</sup> क्लेशशेषावृत्तितमः प्रतिपक्षो हि शून्यता ।  
शून्यता दुःखक्षमनी ततः किं जायते भयम् ॥ Ibid, ix, 55-56.



### CHAPTER III

## VIJÑĀNAVĀDA

Just as the followers of Shūnyavāda were called Shūnyavādins and were also known as the Mādhyamikas because they adhered to the Middle Path, similarly the followers of Vijñānavāda were called Vijñānavādins and were also known as the Yogācāras because they emphasized the importance of Yoga for the realization of Pure Knowledge (Bodhi) in order to become Buddha by going through all the ten stages (Bhūmi) of Bodhisattvahood.

It is generally believed that Asaṅga is the founder of this School. MM. Pt. Hara Prasad Shastri has pointed out that Maitreyanātha, the teacher of Asaṅga, and not Asaṅga, is the real founder of this School.<sup>1</sup> But even Maitreyanātha cannot be taken as its founder because, as we have seen, Vijñānavāda was already present in the Laṅkāvatāra and in Ashvaghoṣa. Maitreyanātha is its first systematic expounder. His fame was overshadowed by his able disciple Asaṅga. Vijñānavāda reached its zenith in Asaṅga's younger brother Vasubandhu who alone has the signal honour of being called "the Second Buddha".<sup>2</sup>

Asaṅga in his *Mahāyānābhīdharmasaṃgīti-shāstra* gives the following seven major features of Mahāyāna:—<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Mahāyāna is comprehensive.
- (2) It shows universal love for all beings.

<sup>1</sup> Indian Historical Quarterly I, 1925, pp. 465f.

<sup>2</sup> Buddhist Logic, Vol. I, Stcherbatsky, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> See Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Suzuki, pp. 62-65.

- (3) It displays wide intellectual outlook by denying the ultimate reality of the object as well as of the subject and by admitting the reality of Consciousness only.
- (4) Its ideal saint is the Bodhisattva who has wonderful spiritual energy to work for the salvation of all beings.
- (5) It maintains that Buddha, by his Excellent Skilfulness (Upāya-Kaushalya), preached according to the grasp and disposition of different people.
- (6) Its final aim is Buddhahood which can be attained by undergoing the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood.
- (7) A Buddha can satisfy the spiritual needs of all beings.

Asaṅga in his *Mahāyānasamparigraha-Shāstra* gives the following ten essential features of the Yogācāra School :—<sup>1</sup>

- (1) The Ālayavijñāna is immanent in all beings.
- (2) There are three kinds of knowledge—illusory, relative and absolute—
- (3) The objective world and the subjective ego are only manifestations of the Ālaya.
- (4) Six Perfections are emphasized.
- (5) In order to realize Buddhahood we have to pass through the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood.
- (6) Mahāyāna is far superior to Hinayāna which is individualistic, selfish and narrow, and which has misunderstood the teaching of Buddha.
- (7) The goal is to become one, through Bodhi, with the Dharmakāya of Buddha's Body of Pure Existence.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 65-74.



- (8) The subject-object duality is to be transcended and unity with Pure Consciousness is to be attained.
- (9) From the ultimate standpoint there is absolutely no difference between Samsāra and Nirvāṇa; and Nirvāṇa is to be realized here and now by embracing 'Sameness' (Samarva) and by discarding 'Plurality' (Nānātva).
- (10) Reality is Dharmakāya or Buddha's Body of Pure Existence which is at once Pure Consciousness and which manifests itself from the point of view of Samsāra, as Nirmāṇakāya or the Body of Becoming, and from the point of view of Nirvāṇa, as Sambhogakāya or the Body of Bliss.

We have seen that *Ashvaghoṣa* identified Tathatā with Bodhi or Ālayavijñāna and the latter with Tathāgatagarbha. The *Laṅkāvatāra* also did the same.

The *Laṅkāvatāra* declares that all dharmas, except Consciousness, are unreal. *Consciousness—only* is the established truth preached by the Buddha. All the three worlds (Kāma, rūpa and arūpa, i.e. of Matter, Form and No-form) are the result of discrimination (vikalpa) or thought-relations. No external object exists in reality. All that is, is Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Though sometimes the *Laṅkāvatāra* appears to support the doctrine of crude Subjectivism, yet really it is pregnant with deeper expressions which forbid us to draw such a conclusion. The external world is the creation, not of the individual consciousness or mind (Manas, Chitta or Vijñāna), but of the Absolute Consciousness (Ālaya or Tathāgatagarbha). The confusion arises on account of the loose use of the words 'Manas', 'Chitta' and 'Vijñāna' by the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

<sup>1</sup> *Laṅkāvatāra*, pp. 186, 158.

Consciousness is first divided into individual consciousness (Pravṛtti-vijñāna) and absolute consciousness (Ālaya-vijñāna). The former is further divided into seven vijñānas. The six vijñānas of the Sarvāstivādins (chakṣu, ghrāṇa, shrotra, jivhā and kāya-vijñānas representing the five sense-cognitions and Manovijñāna or normal consciousness) are recognised and a seventh Manovijñāna (Vishīṣṭa-Manovijñāna) representing Continuous Consciousness is added to them. This is a sort of intermediary between the sixth Manovijñāna and the Ālaya. By the first five vijñānas, an object is imagined or rather *sensed*; by vijñāna (Manovijñāna) it is *thought*; by Manas (Vishīṣṭa-manovijñāna) it is *perceived*; and at the background of these all is the 'synthetic unity of apperception' called Chitta (Ālaya).<sup>1</sup>

It is generally believed that Ālayavijñāna is an ever-changing stream of consciousness. But in the Laṅkāvatāra it is said to be a *permanent, immortal and never-changing store-house of Consciousness* which underlies the apparent subject-object duality. It is declared to be one which transcends the subject-object duality (Grāhya-grāhakavisamīyukta), which is beyond production, existence and destruction (Utpāda-sthiti-bhaṅga-varīya), and beyond all the plurality of imagination (Vikalpa-prapañcha-rahita), and which is to be directly realized by Pure Reason (Nirābhāsa-prajñā-gochara).<sup>2</sup> The force behind creation is the beginningless tendency inspired by Ignorance in the Ālaya to manifest itself as subject and as object. The locus (Āshraya) and the object (Viśaya) of this tendency is the Ālaya itself. Creation, therefore, is the result of this beginningless tendency inspired by Ignorance which leads to plurality (Anādikāla-prapañcha-dausthulyavāsanā).<sup>3</sup> Individual Pravṛtti-vijñānas, like external objects, are manifestation of the Ālaya. They are neither identical with nor

<sup>1</sup> चित्तेन चीयते कर्म मनसा च विधीयते ।

विज्ञानेन विजानाति दृश्यं कल्पेति पञ्चभिः ॥ Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 38.



different from the Ālaya. Just as a lump of earth is neither identical with nor different from the atoms of earth or a gold ornament from gold. If they are identical with the Ālaya then their cessation should also mean the cessation of the Ālaya; and if they are different from the Ālaya, then they should not arise out of it.<sup>1</sup> Ālaya is the ocean; Pravṛtti-vijñānas are the waves. Just as the waves stirred by the wind dance on the ocean, similarly the manifold individual vijñānas stirred by the wind of objects which are the creation of Ignorance, dance on the Ālaya.<sup>2</sup> The waves are neither identical with nor different from the ocean, similarly the seven Pravṛtti-vijñānas are neither identical with nor different from the Absolute Chitta or the Ālaya. The plurality of the waves is the manifestation of the ocean; the manifold vijñānas are the manifestation of the Ālaya. Ultimately there is not the slightest difference between the individual vijñānas and the Ālaya. It is only by the discursive intellect that the Ālaya is compared to the ocean and the vijñānas to the waves. Ultimately the Ālaya is Indescribable and transcends all categories of the intellect.<sup>3</sup>

The Ālaya is also called the Tathāgata-garbha or the Womb of the Tathāgata, pregnant with all possibilities and throbbing with seeds of all vijñānas. Noticing that the Ālaya comes very near the Brahman or the Ātman of the Upaniṣads, the Laṅkāvatāra itself takes pains to distinguish it from the Ātman of the Non-buddhists (Tīrthika): Mahāmāti asks Bhagavān—Tathāgatagarbha is declared by you, O Lord, to be intrinsically shining or self-luminous (Prakṛti-prabhāśvara), to be absolutely pure (Ādi-vishuddha), to be immanent in all beings (Sarva-sattva-dehāntara-gata), to be immortal (Nitya) and permanent (Dhruva) and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> बालयोगस्तथा नित्यो विषयपक्षनेस्ति ।

चित्रैस्तरंगविज्ञानैर्नृत्तमानः प्रवर्तते ॥ Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 47-48.

eternal (Shāshvata) and blissful (Shiva). Then how, O Lord, is it not similar to the Ātman of the Non-Buddhists?.....Bhagavān replied—No, Mahāmāti, the Tathāgatagarbha is not similar to the Ātman because it transcends all categories of finite thought (Nirvikalpa), because it is neither affirmation nor negation nor both nor neither, and because it is to be directly realized by Pure Reason (Nirābhāsa-gochara); while the Ātman leads to Eternalism because it clings to affirmation.<sup>1</sup>

We may however remark that Bhagavān of the Laṅkāvatāra clearly forgets or poses to forget that the Ātman of the Upaniṣads from which is derived the Tathāgatagarbha is also Nirvikalpa and Nirābhāsa-prajñā-gochara.

In his *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra-Shāstra*,<sup>2</sup> Asaṅga clearly declares that Mahāyāna cannot be realized by relational intellect. Intellect (Tarka) is based on Religious Texts (Āgama-nishrita). It is only provisional, not final, because what is held true today may be found untrue tomorrow and what is held true by some may be found untrue by others (Niyata). It is partial, not all-pervasive or omniscient, because it cannot know everything (Avyāpi). It is phenomenal, not real (Sāmvṛta). It leads to dis-satisfaction, woeful discussions, insoluble antinomies and misery. 'Knowledge increaseth sorrow' (Khedavān). Only unwise persons cling to it (Bālāshraya). It cannot give us Reality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 77-79.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. H. Ui and Prof. Winternitz suggest that this Shāstra in all probability, is the work of Maitreya-nātha. Prof. Ui also suggests that the commentary is written by Vasubandhu. Prof. S. Levi regards the Kārikās and the Commentary as the work of Asaṅga. We agree with Prof. Levi.

<sup>3</sup> निश्चितोऽनियतोऽव्यापी सांवृतः खेदवानपि ।

बालाश्रयो मतस्तर्कस्तस्यातो विषयो न तत् ॥



Asaṅga tries to prove that every phenomenal thing, being relative, is momentary. Everything which arises out of causes and conditions is necessarily momentary. If it is not momentary then it will not come into existence at all. The preceding moment is the cause of the succeeding moment. If a thing be permanent, then how can it afterwards cease to exist? The scriptures also tell that the Yogis realize that Saṃskāras come into existence and cease every moment. Again, if a thing which is produced, afterwards becomes permanent, then does it become so by itself or by any other cause? It cannot become permanent by itself because afterwards it ceases to exist. And if it is not permanent by itself, how can it be made permanent by anything else? Change is the law of this universe. External objects do not exist outside of thought. The empirical ego is also unreal. The water of a river is always flowing. Fresh waters are coming in every moment. In a lamp one flame is continually succeeding another. There is nothing in the world which is not momentary.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to remember that it is only the phenomenal which is declared to be momentary by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. Momentariness does not even touch Reality which is above all categories.

The Vijñānavādins deny the ultimate reality of the empirical self or the ego. All miseries and sufferings come out of the false notion of the 'I' and the 'Mine'. When the self does not exist really, how can it be taken as a seer or a knower or a doer or an enjoyer? When Buddha preached the existence of the self it was only to attract the simple-minded and to encourage them to perform good deeds and to refrain from evil ones. In reality there is no ego. If an ego really existed, then there would be either liberation without any effort or no liberation at all. The notion of the ego

<sup>1</sup> Mahāvānasūtrāṅkāra, pp. 149-154.

is due to beginningless Ignorance which must be overcome.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to remember that it is only the empirical self or the ego which is declared to be unreal by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. Pure Consciousness or the Universal Self is not only admitted but is declared to be the only Reality. By its very nature it is Self-luminous; all impurities are adventitious.<sup>2</sup>

The Real, says Asaṅga, is essentially Non-dual. It is neither existence nor non-existence, neither affirmation nor negation, neither identity nor difference, neither one nor many, neither increasing nor decreasing, neither pure nor impure, neither production nor destruction. It is beyond Ignorance and beyond intellect.<sup>3</sup>

The ego is neither real nor unreal nor anything other than real or unreal. It is only an illusion (bhrama). Liberation, therefore, is only the destruction of illusion or ignorance.<sup>4</sup> How unfortunate it is that people directly perceiving the truth of Dependent Origination forget it and take recourse to a so-called independent ego! How deep-rooted is this Ignorance which makes a complete fool of a man and tosses him like a shuttlecock from affirmation to negation and from negation to affirmation! What sort of Ignorance is this which obscures the truth and makes a man fall upon either existence or non-existence?<sup>5</sup> Truly speaking, there is absolutely no difference between Bondage and Liberation. Still, from the phenomenal point of view, we say that by good deeds and true knowledge, the cycle

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 154-159.

<sup>2</sup> मतं च चित्तं प्रकृतिप्रभास्वरं सदा तदागन्तुकदोषद्विषितम् ।

Ibid, xiii, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, vi, 1. Also see ix, 22, 24, 26.

<sup>4</sup> ततश्च मोक्षो भ्रममात्रसंक्षयः । Ibid, vi, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, vi, 4.



of birth and death is stopped and liberation is achieved.<sup>1</sup> A Bodhisattva first realizes that external objects are only imaginary and that mind alone exists. Then he realizes that individual mind too is as much an imagination as any external object. Thus shaking off all duality, he directly perceives the Absolute which is a Harmonious Whole (Dharmadhātu).<sup>2</sup>

The Supreme Reason wherein all categories merge removes all the defects of the intellect just as a strong medicine removes the effect of poison.<sup>3</sup> By becoming one with Reason, a Bodhisattva realizes the Last Meditation (Chaturtha-dhyāna; like Turiya) and ever dwells in the Blissful *Brahman*.<sup>4</sup> He becomes fully qualified to work for the real emancipation of humanity just as a bird, when it has developed full wings, becomes able to soar high.<sup>5</sup>

When a vessel containing water is broken, reflection of the Moon is not visible in it. Similarly in impure persons the reflection of the Buddha is not visible.<sup>6</sup> But knowing the ultimate unreality of the ego and of the dharmas and realizing that Reality is essentially non-dual, a wise man will embrace it recognizing it to be Pure Consciousness. After that even this recognition will be transcended and that indescribable state is Liberation where all the cries of intellect are satisfied and all its categories are merged.<sup>7</sup> Buddha has never taught the Doctrine by speech because it is to be directly realized by Pure Reason.<sup>8</sup> Every phenomenon is merged in the harmonious bosom of Reality. "No appearance

1 न चान्तरं किञ्चन विद्यतेऽनयोः सदर्थवृत्त्या समजन्मनोरिह ।

तथापि जन्मक्षयतो विधीयते समस्य लाभः शुभकर्मकारिणाम् ॥

Ibid, vi, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, vi, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, vii, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, vi, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, ix, 16.

<sup>4</sup> ब्राह्मोविहारैर्विहरत्युदारैः ।

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, xi, 47.

Ibid, vii, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, xii, 2.

is so low that the Absolute does not embrace it".<sup>1</sup> Knowing this world to be merely a composite of Forces (Samskāras), knowing that the ego and the objects do not exist, and knowing further that all this is merely suffering, a wise man will leave far behind the baneful existence of the empirical ego and will embrace the Great Universal Soul (Mahātman).<sup>2</sup> Setting on the right path, understanding the true doctrine of Nairātmya, and clearly grasping the real meaning of Shūnyatā, the Enlightened Ones transcend the individual existence and realize the Pure Soul (Shuddhātman) and thus become one with that Universal Soul.<sup>3</sup> This is the Pure Existence of the Buddha and is called the Highest Soul (Paramātman).<sup>4</sup> Rivers after rivers pour themselves into the Ocean, but the Ocean is neither satisfied nor does it increase; Buddhas after Buddhas pour themselves into Reality, but the Absolute is neither satisfied nor does it increase. How wonderful it is!<sup>5</sup> Different rivers with different waters flowing through different places are called only 'rivers'. But when they merge in the ocean, they become one with it. No more are they called 'rivers'; they are 'the ocean'. Similarly different persons holding different views are called 'finite intellects'. But when they merge in the Buddha, the Absolute, they become one with it; they are the Harmonious Whole.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> धर्मधातुर्विनिर्मुक्तो यस्माद् धर्मो न विद्यते । Ibid, xiii, 12.

<sup>2</sup> विहाय योजयन्मयात्मदृष्टिं महात्मदृष्टिं श्रयते महार्थम् ॥

Ibid, xiv, 37.

<sup>3</sup> शून्यतायां विशुद्धायां नैरात्म्यान् मार्गलाभतः ।

बुद्धाः शुद्धात्मलाभत्वाद् गता आत्ममहात्मा । Ibid, ix, 23.

<sup>4</sup> अनेन बुद्धानामनास्त्रवे धातो परमात्मा व्यवस्थाप्यते ।

Ibid, pp. 37-38.

The Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra of the Sanskrit Canon identifies the Mahātman with the Tathāgatagarbha just as the Laṅkāvatāra identifies the Ālaya with the Tathāgatagarbha. See 'Systems of Buddhist Thought': Yamakami Sogen, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, ix, 55.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, ix, 82-85.



The Yogāchāras stress the importance of different Vihāras and Bhūmis which purify a Bodhisattva just as fire purifies gold<sup>1</sup> and by which discursive intellect is transformed into Pure Reason.

Vasubandhu formerly belonged to the Kāshmīra-Vaibhāṣika branch of the Sarvāstivāda School of Hīnayāna<sup>2</sup> but was later on converted to Vijñānavāda by his elder brother Asaṅga. Even in his earlier work, the Abhidharmakosha, the influence of Mahāyāna is visible. Here the word 'Abhidharma' is identified with Pure Knowledge together with its means. It is declared that the phenomenal is like 'water in a jar', while the Absolute is like the vast ocean.<sup>3</sup> The intellect is transcended in the last Meditation in which the meditator becomes one with the Great Brahman.<sup>4</sup> This Pure Knowledge is called Shrāmaṇya as well as Brāhmaṇya.<sup>5</sup>

In his *Vijñapti-Mātratā-Siddhi: Vimśatikā*, with his own commentary on it, Vasubandhu proves that Reality is Pure Consciousness and that external objects do not exist outside of thought, by refuting the objections of the opponents. And in his *Vijñapti-Mātratā-Siddhi: Trimśikā*, Vasubandhu develops his theory to fullness.

In the Mahāyāna, the *Vimśatikā* tells us, all the three worlds do not exist outside of thought. Mind, thought, consciousness, knowledge are synonyms.<sup>6</sup> External objects depend on thought like the hair seen

<sup>1</sup> Bodhisattvabhūmi, given as an Appendix to the Dasha-bhūmika-Sūtra edited by Rahder, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> काश्मीरवैभाषिकनीतिसिद्धः प्रायो मयायं कथितोऽभिधर्मः ।

Abhidharmakosha, viii, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, vi, 4.

<sup>4</sup> महाब्रह्मत्वं तत्फलम् । Ibid, viii, 23.

<sup>5</sup> श्रामण्यममलो मार्गः, vi, 51 and ब्राह्मण्यमेव तत्, vi, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Vimśatikā-Vṛtti on Kārikā, 1.

floating in the atmosphere or like the perception of the double-Moon.<sup>1</sup> The opponent urges that if external objects do not exist then we cannot account for their spatial determination (Desha-niyama), their temporal determination (Kāla-niyama), the indetermination of the perceiving stream of consciousness (santānāniyama) and their action (Kṛtya-Kriyā).<sup>2</sup> If representations arise without there being any external sense-objects, then how is it that an object is seen in a particular place and a particular time? And how is it that all persons, and not one person only, present at that particular place and time perceive that particular object? And how is it that fruitful activity is possible? If things like food, water, cloth, poison, weapons etc. seen in a dream are purely imaginary and devoid of activity, it does not mean that real food and real water also cannot satisfy hunger and thirst. External objects therefore must exist.<sup>3</sup>

Vasubandhu replies : These four things mentioned by the opponent do not justify independent existence of external objects because they are found even in dreams and in hell where there are no external objects. Even in a dream things like a city, a garden, a woman, a man etc. are seen in a particular place and at a particular time and not in all places and at all times. Fruitful activity too results from unreal dream-objects for the roaring of a dream-tiger causes real fear and disturbs sleep and an erotic dream is followed by consequences which are physically real. Again, all those persons, and not one of them only, who, on account of their bad deeds, go to hell, see the same river of pus etc. Thus there is indetermination of the stream of consciousness. So in dreams and in hell all these four things are present though there are

<sup>1</sup> *Viṃśatikā*, K. 1.

<sup>2</sup> यदि विज्ञप्तिरनर्था, नियमो देशकालयोः ।  
सन्तानस्यानियमश्च युक्ता कुल्यत्रिषा न च ॥ *Ibid*, K. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Viṃśatikā-Vṛtti* on K. 2.



no external objects. The infernal guards cannot be real because they themselves do not suffer the agony of hell. The opponent admits that infernal guards are produced by the force of the deeds of those persons who go to hell. But the force or the impression (*vāsanā*) of the deed is in consciousness, while its result is wrongly imagined by the opponent to be outside consciousness. How can it be possible? The impression as well as the result of the deed must be in consciousness itself. Hence consciousness is the only reality.<sup>1</sup>

Consciousness manifests itself into subject as well as into object. It arises out of its own seed and then it manifests itself as an external object. Therefore Buddha said that there are two bases of cognition—internal and external. By knowing this thing, one realizes that there is no person ego and that there are no external objects, as both are only manifestations of consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

The Indescribable Pure Consciousness which is to be directly realized by the Buddhas can never be denied. It cannot be conceived by intellect. The idea of Pure Consciousness as conceived by finite thought with the help of its category of 'existence' is also unreal. For, if it were real, the conceptions of intellect would be real and this would undermine the doctrine that Pure Consciousness alone exists. The fact is that Pure Consciousness alone exists. The fact is that Pure Consciousness cannot be grasped by intellect as an object. But this does not mean that Pure Consciousness in itself does not exist because it can be directly realized by Pure Reason which transcends the subject-object duality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vinśatikā*, K. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, K. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> यो बालैर्धर्माणां स्वभावो ग्राह्यग्राहकादिः परिकल्पितस्तेन कल्पितेनात्मना तेषां नैरात्म्यं न त्वनिर्निर्लाभ्येनात्मना यो बुद्धानां विषय इति ।

*Vinśatikā-Vṛtti* on K. 10.

Vasubandhu refutes other arguments of the opponent. Perception, he says, cannot guarantee the existence of external objects because the awareness is the same even in dreams and in the perception of the double-Moon. Memory too does not imply the perception of an external object but only its consciousness. The opponent urges that if there is no difference between dreaming and waking states then we should know even when we are fully awake that external objects do not exist in the manner in which we know that the dream-objects are unreal. To this objection Vasubandhu's answer is that before we are fully awake we cannot know that dream-objects are unreal. Things seen in a dream are as real to the dreamer as any object is to us. It is only when we are awake that we realize the unreality of dream-objects. Similarly the worldly people are slumbering in ignorance. They do not realize, as long as they are under the infatuation of ignorance, that this world does not really exist. It is only when true knowledge dawns that the fact that Reality is Pure Consciousness can be realized.<sup>1</sup> Intellect inevitably involves itself in dualism. And unless the subject-object duality is transcended, we cannot realize Reality.<sup>2</sup> Vasubandhu concludes his *Vimśatikā* by pointing out that he has, according to the best of his ability, proved that Reality is Pure Consciousness. But as this Reality is beyond discursive intellect it cannot be fully grasped by it. It can be only realized by transcending the subject-object duality, by going beyond all the categories of intellect and by embracing Pure Reason, in short, by becoming a Buddha.<sup>3</sup>

Sthiramati in his Commentary on the *Trimśikā* tells us that the aim of Vasubandhu in writing this

<sup>1</sup> स्वप्ने दृग्विषयाभावं नाप्रबुद्धोज्ज्वलति ॥ *Vimśatikā*, K. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid on K. 21.

<sup>3</sup> विज्ञप्तिमात्रतासिद्धिः स्वशक्तिसदृशी मया ।

कृतेयं सर्वथा सा तु न चिन्त्या बुद्धगोचरः ॥ *Vimśatikā*, K. 22.



treatise is to show the real meaning of the ultimate unreality of the subject (Pudgala-nairātmya) and of the object (Dharma-nairātmya). There are two kinds of Ignorance. The first is Kleshāvaraṇa, which leads to all sorts of suffering and is due to the false notion of the reality of the individual subject. The second is Jñeyāvaraṇa which screens the real nature of the objects and is due to the false notion of the reality of external objects. To destroy these two kinds of Ignorance is the aim of Trimshikā. Some philosophers maintain that even external objects, like consciousness, are absolutely real; while others declare that even consciousness, like external objects, is only relative and therefore unreal. To demolish these two extreme views (Ekāntavāda) is also the aim of this treatise.

Some scholars maintain that Shūnyavāda declares even consciousness to be unreal. But in the last chapter we have shown that this is not the case. It is very important to remember that it is only the individual subject which is declared to be unreal by Shūnyavāda. Vijñānavāda also agrees here. Shūnyavāda criticizes self-consciousness if it means consciousness of consciousness. Fire cannot burn itself. The edge of a sword cannot cut itself. The tip of a finger cannot touch itself. Consciousness of consciousness leads to infinite regress. But Shūnyavāda maintains the reality of Pure Consciousness. Nāgārjuna himself identifies his Prapañcha-Shūnya Tattva with Bodhi or Jñāna. If the Bodhi of Nāgārjuna, the Chitta of Āryadeva and the Bodhi-Chitta of Shāntideva are not Pure Consciousness or the Self-luminous Self which is Pure Consciousness, what else can they be?

Reality, says the Trimshikā, is Pure Consciousness. This Reality (Vijñaptimātra) on account of its inherent power (Shakti) suffers threefold modification. First of all it manifests itself as Ālayavijñāna or Vipāka which is a Store-house Consciousness where the seeds of all phenomena are present. Then this Store-house Cons-

consciousness further manifests itself in two forms. Firstly it takes the form of individual subject or ego or mental operations (Manana or Manovijñāna), and secondly it manifests itself as the perception of the so-called external objects (Viśaya-vijñapti). Behind these three modifications is the permanent background of eternal and unchangeable Pure Consciousness (Vijñāna or Vijñapti-mātra).<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note the difference between the Ālaya of the Laṅkāvatāra and the Ālaya of Vasubandhu. The Ālayavijñāna of the Laṅkāvatāra which is identified with Tathāgatagarbha or the Pure Chitta is identical with the Vijñaptimātra of Vasubandhu. Both are Pure Consciousness which is the permanent background of all phenomena, subjective as well as objective, and which ultimately transcends the subject-object duality. The Ālayavijñāna of Vasubandhu is only a phenomenal manifestation of this Pure Consciousness. It contains the seeds of all phenomena, subjective as well as objective (Sarva-bījakam, Kārikā 2). It is a continually changing stream of consciousness like a stream of water (Vartate Srotasaughavat, K. 4). When Buddhahood is realized, its flow at once comes to an end (Tasya Vyavṛttirarhatve, K. 5).

The individual self (Manovijñāna) depends on the Ālaya and is accompanied by four kinds of suffering—self-notion, self-delusion, self-pride and self-love.<sup>2</sup> It ceases to function when the false notion of the Ego is destroyed and when the categories of intellect are transcended.<sup>3</sup>

The third modification, the perception of the objects, which takes the form of the six Vijñānas

<sup>1</sup> आत्मधर्मोपचारो हि विविधो यः प्रवर्तते ।

विज्ञानपरिणामेऽसौ परिणामः स च त्रिधा ॥

विपाको मननाख्यश्च विज्ञप्तिविषयस्य च । Trishikā, K. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 7.



(*Ṣaḍvidha*) is of two kinds—pure (*Kushala*) and impure (*Akushala*) and is accompanied by various sufferings (*Klesha*) and sub-sufferings (*Upaklesha*).<sup>1</sup> These *Vijñānas* stand in the same relation to the *Ālaya* as waves stand to water (*Taraṅgāṇām yathā jale*, K. 15).

Thus we see that the subject as well as the object are only modifications of the *Ālaya* which itself is only a modification of Pure Consciousness. Hence it is established that Pure Consciousness is the only Reality.<sup>2</sup>

The *Paramārtha* of *Shūnyavāda* is also called *Pariniṣpanna* by *Vijñānavāda*, and the *Samvṛti* of *Shūnyavāda* is further divided into *Paratantra* and *Parikalpita* by *Vijñānavāda*. The former is the relative while the latter is the imaginary. The *Laṅkāvatāra* says that the *Parikalpita* is the purely imaginary like a hare's horn or a barren woman's child or a sky-flower or a dream or a mirage or the perception of double-Moon etc.; the *Paratantra* is the relative which depends on causes and conditions, which is based on discursive intellect, and which comes under the realm of the phenomenal; the *Pariniṣpanna* is the *Paramārtha*, the absolutely real which is based on Pure Reason or Supreme Wisdom which transcends the subject-object duality of the intellect and the plurality of the phenomena, and which is variously called as *Tathatā* or *Tathāgatagarbha* or *Ālayavijñāna* or *Āryajñāna* or *Samyagjñāna* or *Prajñā*.<sup>3</sup> *Maitreyanātha* also says that the *Parikalpita* is the purely imaginary or absolutely unreal (*Atyanta-shūnya*); the *Paratantra* is the relative based on intellect (*Laukika-gochara*); and the *Pariniṣpanna* is the absolutely real based on Pure Reason (*Avikalpa-jñāna-gochara*).<sup>4</sup> *Asaṅga* says that the imaginary is a mere name (*Nāma* or *jalpa*); the relative is also like an error (*Bhrānti*),

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Laṅkāvatāra*, pp. 56, 67, 68, 222, 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Madhyāntavibhāga*, p. 19.

to phenomena only. It is only the phenomenal which is momentary. And in this sphere momentariness is emphasized. But momentariness does not even touch Reality. Reality, truly speaking, transcends all the categories of the intellect. It is neither momentary nor permanent. But from the phenomenal point of view it must be described as the eternal, immortal and permanent background of all momentary phenomena. We have also shown that it is only the empirical self or the individual subject or the Ego that is declared to be unreal by Vijñānavāda. The reality of Pure Consciousness alone, variously called as Ālayavijñāna (of the Laṅkāvatāra), Tathāgatagarbha, Chittamātra, Vijñaptimātra, is emphatically maintained. The Pure Consciousness transcends the dualism of the subject and the object as well as the plurality of phenomena. It is the same as the Self-luminous Self.

Vijñānavāda cannot be called subjectivism. It is not the individual consciousness (Manovijñāna) as associated with other momentary functional ideas (Pravṛttivijñāna) that creates the external world. The external world is declared to be only a manifestation or modification of Absolute Consciousness. When the external world is declared to be unreal what is meant is that it does not exist independently and outside of Consciousness. True, the dream state and the waking state are placed on a par. But it should not be forgotten that the Parikalpita is distinguished from the Paratantra. Both agree in being ultimately unreal and in existing inside Consciousness. They cannot break the adamant circle of Consciousness. The subject and the object dance within this circle which they cannot overstep. The *objectivity* of the external world is not denied. The objects appear *as objects* to the subject which perceives them. Only their objectivity does not fall outside of Consciousness because the distinction of the subject and the object is within Consciousness itself which ultimately transcends the subject-object duality. Consciousness is immanent in all phenomena and it is



also the permanent transcendental background of all phenomena.

MM. Pt. Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya has raised an interesting point. He says that the Pure Consciousness of Vasubandhu is not absolutely permanent (Kūṭastha-nitya) but only relatively so (Āpekṣika-nitya). Pt. Bhattacharya distinguishes between 'absolutely permanent' and 'relatively permanent'. He calls the former as 'Nitya' and the latter as 'Dhruva'. He says that Vasubandhu (in his Trimṣhikā, Kārika 30) uses the word 'Dhruva' and not 'Nitya' for his Vijñaptimātra. It is therefore only relatively permanent or 'enduring' like a stream or a flame. It may be called 'Santati-nitya'.<sup>1</sup>

Pt. Bhattacharya is perfectly right in saying that the Ālayavijñāna is relatively permanent. Vasubandhu himself has made it clear that the Ālaya is only a phenomenal manifestation of Pure Consciousness and is like a stream (Srotasaughavat). It may be rightly called 'Santati-nitya'. But perhaps Pt. Bhattacharya fails to distinguish the Ālayavijñāna of Vasubandhu from his Vijñaptimātra. Pt. Bhattacharya is certainly wrong in saying that the Vijñaptimātra is also relatively permanent. His distinction between Nitya and Dhruva is not absolute because these words are often used as synonyms by Buddhism as well as by Vedānta. The words 'Dhruva', 'Nitya', 'Ajara', 'Amara', 'Shāshvata', 'Kūṭastha' etc. are often used as synonyms. Vasubandhu uses the word 'Dhruva' here in the sense of the absolutely permanent. The Vijñaptimātra or the Pure Consciousness which is the only Reality is not 'enduring' but 'absolutely permanent'. Sthiramati, the commentator on Vasubandhu, while explaining the Kārikā in which Vijñaptimātra is declared to be 'Dhruva', clearly points out that the word 'Dhruva' means 'Nitya'. This is sufficient to prove the falsity of Pt. Bhattacharya's

<sup>1</sup> The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda, Introduction, p. cxlii.

contention. Sthiramati openly says that Vijñaptimātra is eternal and permanent; that it is blissful because it is permanent for what is permanent is bliss and what is momentary is misery.<sup>1</sup>

Vasubandhu's system, therefore, is Absolute Idealism. In fact we can say that in the Advaita Vedānta, Vijñaptimātra gives place to Brahman or Atman, Ālaya-vijñāna to Ishvara, Manovijñāna to Jīva, Viṣayavijñapti to Jagat, and Parīṇāma to Vivarta.

<sup>1</sup> ध्रुवो नित्यत्वाद् अक्षयतया, सुखो नित्यत्वाद् एव यदनित्यं तद् दुःखं,  
अयं च नित्यः इत्यस्मात् सुखः । Trīmshikā-Bhāṣya, p. 44.



## CHAPTER IV

### SVATANTRA-VIJÑĀNAVĀDA.

This school is called Svatantra-Vijñānavāda or Svatantra-Yogāchāra or Sautrāntika-Yogāchāra School of Buddhism. It accepts the metaphysical truth of Vijñānavāda that Reality is Pure Consciousness and wants to support it with independent logical arguments. It wants to combine the metaphysical Idealism of Vijñānavāda with the logical and epistemological Critical Realism of the Sautrāntika School. We may call it as the Logical School of Buddhism.

Vasubandhu's disciple Diñnāga who founded this school is also the founder of Medieval Indian Logic, just as Gotama is the founder of the Ancient and Gaṅgesha of the Modern Indian Logic. Founded by Diñnāga, fully elaborated and explained by Dharma-kīrti, developed almost to perfection by Shāntarakṣita, this school culminated in Kamalashīla, the last great teacher of Buddhism in India.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhist logic is at once logic, epistemology and metaphysics combined. It is logic because it deals with syllogism (Parārthānumāna), inference (Svārthānumāna) and Import of Words (Apoha). It is epistemology because it undertakes a thorough investigation

<sup>1</sup> These Buddhists are generally regarded as Vijñānavādins and no distinction is made between earlier Vijñānavāda and this later form of Vijñānavāda advocated by these writers. According to us this confusion between the original Vijñānavāda of Lañkāvatāra, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu and this later development of it by these writers treated in this chapter has begot many worse confusions and has been mainly responsible for giving rise to many misunderstandings. It is, therefore, very necessary to treat these writers as belonging to a separate school which may be called Svatantra-Vijñānavāda.

of sense-perception (Pratyakṣa), of the validity of knowledge (Prāmāṇya), and of the Means of Cognition (Pramāṇa). It is metaphysics because it discusses the real nature of sensation and of thought and admits that Reality is supra-logical.

Nāgārjuna wrote *Vigrahavyāvartini*, a logical treatise. Aśaṅga introduced the Nyāya syllogism into Buddhism. Vasubandhu wrote two logical treatises—*Vādaśāstra* and *Vādaśāstrāṭīkā*. We are surprised to find Dīnāga telling us that *Vādaśāstra* is not the work of Vasubandhu.<sup>1</sup> But our curiosity is satisfied by the commentator, Jinendrabuddhi who points out that it “is not what Vasubandhu would have said in his ripe years; that it was composed while he was yet a *Vaiśiṣṭika*...In his *Vādaśāstrāṭīkā*, Vasubandhu is supposed to have corrected his formulations”.<sup>2</sup> Dīnāga undertook to complete the logical teachings of his master Vasubandhu and founded the Logical School.

It is very important to remember that though the Logical School accepts the fundamental doctrine of *Vijñānavāda* that Reality is Pure Consciousness, it rejects the permanence of Consciousness. *Vijñānavāda* restricts the application of the theory of Momentariness to phenomena only and openly declares Reality to be permanent Consciousness. *Svatantra-Vijñānavāda* accepts that Reality is Pure Consciousness but it universalizes the theory of Momentariness and openly declares even this Pure Consciousness to be only momentary. Confessing that he agreed with Vasubandhu in metaphysics, Dīnāga consented to remain on the logical plane and under the disguise of supporting Absolute Idealism with independent logical arguments, he really tried to revive the theory of Momentariness in a subtle manner and actually busied himself with logical revival in order to modify the

<sup>1</sup> *Pramāṇa-Samuccaya*, i, 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Buddhist Logic*, Vol. I, Stcherbatsky, p. 30.



Absolute Idealism of Vasubandhu by trying to fuse it somehow with Critical Realism. Although the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins, Diñnāga, Dharmakīrti, Shāntarakṣita and all, pay lip-homage to Vasubandhu by confessing that so far as ultimate reality is concerned they are following in the footsteps of Vasubandhu, yet what they actually do is to undermine the whole metaphysics of Vasubandhu by degrading his permanent Consciousness to the level of a momentary Vijñāna or a unique momentary Particular which they call Svalakṣaṇa. The Ālayavijñāna or the Tathāgatagarbha is completely ignored by them.

Unfortunately the *magnum opus* of Diñnāga, the Pramāṇa-Samuchchaya, is not available in original Sanskrit. Only its First Chapter has been reconstructed into Sanskrit from its Tibetan Version by Mr. H. R. Rangaswamy Iyenger. The Pramāṇa-Vārtika of Dharmakīrti, though styled as a Commentary on the Pramāṇa-Samuchchaya, is in fact an independent work, while the Tattva-Saṅgraha of Shāntarakṣita, though called an independent work, may be taken as a free metrical commentary on the Pramāṇa-Vārtika.

The Naiyāyika and the Mīmāṃsaka were the two major opponents of Buddhism at that time. Diñnāga had ruthlessly criticized the Nyāya-Sūtras of Gotama and the Nyāya-Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana. Uddyotakara in his Nyāya-Vārtika refuted the charges of Diñnāga and defended the Nyāya position. Dharmakīrti in his Pramāṇa-Vārtika demolished all the arguments of Uddyotakara in such a merciless manner that the eminent Advaitin, Vāchaspati Mishra, at a much later date, had to comment on Uddyotakara in his Nyāya-Vārtika-Tātparya-Tīkā in order to "rescue the old argument-cows of Uddyotakara which were entangled in the mud of Buddhist criticism". Dharmakīrti's attack on Mīmāṃsā was also so damaging that it provoked Kumārila to write his voluminous Sholka-Vārtika to refute Buddhism and defend Mīmāṃsā. The attacks

of the *Naiyāyikas* and of the *Mīmāṃsakās*, in their turn, gave rise to the writings of Shāntarakṣita and Kamalaśhīla. Shāntarakṣita in his *Tattva-saṅgraha* and Kamalaśhīla in his *Pañjikā* on it, refute extensively all the charges of the *Naiyāyikas*, especially of Uddyotakara and of the *Mīmāṃsakas*, especially of Kumarila, and criticize all other schools prevalent in their time. But ultimately Buddhism could not resist the onslaught of Brahmanism and was being rapidly ousted from the land of its birth. Shāntarakṣita himself was forced to retire to Tibet where he called his disciple Kamalaśhīla also. Kamalaśhīla was the last great scholar of Buddhism in India, though even after him upto a much later date, a Buddhist scholar here and a Buddhist scholar there continued to write. Thus it is that the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda school, after producing an enormously rich philosophical literature by way of approval and by way of criticism, came to an end and with it virtually ended Buddhist philosophy in India.

Now, keeping this background in mind, we proceed to deal with this school. Here we are concerned more with its metaphysical side than with its logical side.

*The Revival of the Doctrine of Momentariness together with the Theory of Dependent Origination on which it is based :*

The Logical School maintains that sensation and thought are the two radically different sources of knowledge. Sensation reflects the unique, momentary, existent, ultimate reality (*Svalakṣaṇa*). Thought conceives a chain of moments by constructing relations and images (*Sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). Accordingly there are two sources of knowledge—perception (*Pratyakṣa*) and inference (*Anumāna*). Perception gives us direct, vivid and concrete reflection of the object. Inference gives us only indirect, vague and abstract thought-constructions.

Right knowledge is successful or efficacious knowledge. Momentariness is equated with motion or



change and efficiency is equated with existence. The real is the casually efficient; the unreal is the inefficient. The ultimately existent, says Dharmakīrti, is the efficient.<sup>1</sup> The inefficient is the unreal and we have nothing to do with its existence or non-existence just as a prospective bride has nothing to do with the beauty or ugliness of a eunuch.<sup>2</sup> A real fire is that which burns and cooks and sheds light. A fire which neither burns nor cooks nor sheds light is unreal. The ultimately existent is the momentary particular 'thing-in-itself'. It is the 'this', the 'here', the 'now', the 'present moment of efficiency'. It is indescribable and unutterable because it is shorn of all objectivized images. Everything else has only indirect, borrowed or second-rate reality. All thought-relations are fictitious. They are a figment of the imagination.

Existence is efficiency and efficiency is change. The changeless is the inefficient and the inefficient is the unreal. Reality is motion or change. It is instantaneous and kinetic. Only ceaseless change exists. Motion is nothing but the moving thing itself; efficiency is the efficient thing itself; existence is the unique momentary particular itself. Motion, change, efficiency, existence are only names for the momentary thing-in-itself. Similarly non-existence also is only a name for the thing annihilated. Existence and non-existence are thus two different sides of the same reality.

We are told that reality is motion and we are also told that motion is impossible. Motion is an illusion because things being momentary have no time to move. Motion is only a series of immobilities. Flashes of energy follow one another giving rise to an illusion of motion. In a stream fresh waters are coming in every moment. In a lamp a series of different flames presents an illusion of one flame. The apparent

<sup>1</sup> अर्थक्रियासामर्थ्यलक्षणं परमार्थसत् । Nyāyabindu, i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 212.

contradiction is solved by the fact that motion is not something over and above the moving things. Things themselves are motion.

Causality is not real production. It is only functional interdependence. The cause does not produce the effect. It has no time to do so. The cause merely precedes the effect and the effect merely follows the cause. Existence is efficiency and efficiency itself is the cause. Things arise neither out of self nor out of not-self nor out of both nor out of neither. They are not produced at all. The effects are merely functionally dependent upon their causes.<sup>1</sup> All dharmas, therefore, are inactive and forceless (*Nirvyāpārāḥ Akinchit-karāḥ Sarvadharmāḥ*). The seeming contradiction that Reality is efficiency and that all elements are inactive is solved by the fact that there is no efficiency over and above existence, that existence itself is causal efficiency (*Sattaiva-Vyāpṛtiḥ*).

Dharmakīrti says that everything is momentary. Whatever is produced must be destroyed. That which comes into existence and afterwards ceases to exist is called momentary. Reality is annihilation. Change exists by itself and always. Reality is such that it is momentary. Annihilation or destruction, therefore, does not require any cause. Because annihilation is uncaused, it automatically follows everything. Annihilation does not mean destruction of a positive entity. Hence the view that a positive entity is destroyed should be rejected. So when we say that a thing is destroyed what we really mean is that a thing is momentary.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly Shāntarakṣita also observes that all produced things are necessarily momentary because they do not depend for their destruction on any cause. They

<sup>1</sup> न स्वतो नापि परतो न द्वाभ्यां नाप्यहेतुतः ।

प्रतीत्य यत् समुत्पन्नं नोत्पन्नं तत् स्वभावतः ॥

<sup>2</sup> *Pramāṇa-vārtika*, i, 280.



are always and everywhere independent of any cause in regard to their destruction. The so-called causes of destruction are entirely inefficacious and forceless.<sup>1</sup> All entities, being produced, are destroyed. Destruction, therefore, does not depend on any cause except on the fact of being produced.

Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla maintain that destruction is neither an entity nor a non-entity. Destruction is of two kinds. Firstly it means the "momentary character of a thing" (Kṣaṇa-śthiti-dharma-rūpa-vināśa). This is transcendental impermanence. Secondly it means "disruption" (Dhvaṁsa-rūpa-nāśa). This is empirical annihilation. An entity itself, because it exists for a moment only, is called 'destruction'. This destruction has a cause. It is only disruption which is causeless. When we admit that transcendental impermanence has a cause what we mean is simply this that an entity is itself the cause of its destruction because the very fact that a momentary entity is produced implies that it is destroyed. There can be no other cause of its destruction.<sup>2</sup> 'The character of coming immediately after the thing' (Vastvanantarabhāvitva) does not belong to this destruction because this destruction is born along with the production of the momentary thing itself.<sup>3</sup> Again, disruption too can have no cause. When we say that there is empirical annihilation of a thing what we mean is simply that the thing is not there. This destruction does not convey the affirmation of anything.

That thing which exists for a moment only is called momentary. Kṣaṇa is not a time-moment. It is the character of being destroyed immediately after being produced. The very nature of a thing to disappear after existing for one moment only is called 'Kṣaṇa'. That thing which has this nature is called 'Kṣaṇika'.

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-saṅgraha, K. 357.

<sup>2</sup> यो हि भावः क्षणस्यापी विनाश इति नीयते । Ibid, K. 375.

<sup>3</sup> चलभावस्वरूपस्य भावेनैव सहोदयात् । Ibid, K. 376.

As a matter of fact there is absolutely no difference between the momentary character and the thing which is supposed to possess this momentary character. The momentary character itself is the momentary thing. The distinction is entirely a product of the intellect. It is the creation of the language. Though ultimately unreal this distinction is justified in the empirical world because the use of words depends on the pure whim of the speaker.<sup>1</sup>

Only a momentary thing can exist because it alone can be efficient. A permanent entity is inefficient and hence unreal. A permanent entity should produce all its effects simultaneously because the efficient cause being present there is no reason why its effects should be delayed. If it is urged that a permanent entity can produce successive effects because of its association with successive accessories (*Kramiṇaḥ Sahkāriṇaḥ*), then the question arises whether the accessories work by producing a peculiar modification (*Atishaya*) in the permanent cause or they work independently. In the former case, is the peculiar modification identical with or different from the permanent cause? If it is identical, then it is this peculiar modification, not the permanent entity, which is the cause; if it is different, then how can it be related to the permanent entity? In the latter case, how can a permanent cause tolerate the independent functioning of the accessories? Again, the relation between the permanent cause and its accessories cannot be of the nature of identity (*Tādātmya*) or of productivity (*Tadutpatti*) because the accessories are different from the permanent cause. Nor can it be of the nature of inherence (*Samavāya*) because it is only of the nature of assistance (*Upakāra*). Again, if the nature of the permanent cause together with its accessories is the same as without them, then either

<sup>1</sup> उत्पादानन्तरास्थायि स्वरूपं यच्च वस्तुनः ।

तदुच्यते क्षणः सोऽस्ति यस्य तत् क्षणिकं मतम् ॥

Ibid, K. 388-389.



the accessories are also permanent and then should give rise to simultaneous creation, or else they are useless.<sup>1</sup>

The Naiyāyika and the Mimāṃsaka object that if things are momentary, then the theory of Karma is thrown overboard. An action is done by one while its result befalls another. Moreover, how can recognition be explained since there is no perceiver who can compare the present with the past? How can a momentary cause which does not abide till the production of the effect, produce it? How can bondage or liberation belong to a momentary entity? Are not all efforts for liberation futile?

Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla reply: Identity means only similarity. Recognition is due to memory and memory is due to false imagination. If an entity perceived now is the same as perceived previously, then the difficulty is that how can a cognition of the past apprehend a cognition of the present? The mistake is due to intellect. We know that a "flame" is nothing but a series of different flames appearing and disappearing every moment. Still we call it the "same flame". It is only conventional. Again, the notion of the 'doer' or 'enjoyer' becomes possible in reference to the supposed 'unity of the chain or the series'. This unity is only a creation of the intellect. It is not real.<sup>2</sup> The formula of causation is 'this being produced, that is produced'. The preceding states produce the subsequent states. The cause perishes after it has produced the effect, not before. It perishes in the second moment. The causal efficiency ceases immediately after the production of the effect. The effect is thus produced by the causal efficiency of the first moment. And before the production of the effect that efficiency

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 397-424.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 504.

does not cease. The Vaibhāṣikas maintain that the effect is produced at the third moment. In their view, of course, an effect is produced when the causal efficiency has ceased. But in our view the cause comes into existence in the first moment and produces the effect in the second moment and immediately after producing it the cause ceases to exist.<sup>1</sup> Cause and effect cannot be simultaneous because the cause comes into existence in the first moment before the effect is produced. The cause does not produce the effect holding it, as it were, in a pair of tongs, nor does the effect arise clinging firmly to the cause, as it were, like a lover passionately clinging to his beloved, by reason of which cause and effect may be regarded as simultaneous.<sup>2</sup> There is no causal operation separate from the cause. Causality itself is efficiency. Causality means invariable antecedence (Ānantaryanīyama). Existence means efficiency (Sattaiva Vyāpṛtiḥ). The mere existence of the cause is the efficient causal operation. Cause being present, effect necessarily follows. Causality is the determination of the succeeding states by the preceding states.<sup>3</sup> In fact, there is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. There is none who recognizes or remembers. What exists is only a series of changing mental states; the 'unity' of the series is an illusion. Every Kṣaṇa is a unique momentary existent. Persons engrossed in false notions of the 'Soul' etc. do not perceive this truth. But those who have fully realized this ultimate truth know very well that everything is in a perpetual flux, that the preceding moments invariably go on determining the succeeding moments and knowing

<sup>1</sup> तस्मादनष्टात् तद्वेतोः प्रथमक्षणभाविनः ।

कार्यमुत्पद्यते शक्ताद् द्वितीयक्षण एव तु ॥ Ibid, K. 512.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 516-517.

<sup>3</sup> सत्तैव व्यापृतिस्तस्यां सत्यां कार्योदयो घटः ।

य आनन्तर्यनियमः सैवापेक्षाभिधीयते ॥ Ibid, K. 520-521.



this they perform good deeds.<sup>1</sup> Bondage, therefore, means only the series of painful states produced by ignorance and the rest, and libetation means the cessation of this series and the consequent purity of mental states produced by right knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the theory of Momentariness repudiates at one stroke all metaphysical permanent entities like Primordial Matter, Self, God etc. etc.<sup>3</sup>

Conforming to the two kinds of Prameyas or objects of cognition—the direct unique Particular given in pure sensation or pure consciousness and the indirect vague Universal given in thought-construction, there are only two valid Pramāṇas or means of cognition—Perception (Pratyakṣa) and Inference (Anumāna).

#### *Exposition of Perception :—*

According to Nyāya, perception is that non-illusive cognition which is produced by the contact of the senses with external objects. For the Svatantra-Vijñānavādin external objects do not exist outside of thought. Diñnāga therefore defines perception as devoid of all thought-determinations, names, universals etc.<sup>4</sup> The adjective “Non-illusive” (Abhṛānta) used by Aśaṅga is dropped by Diñnāga as merely superfluous meaning only “Non-constructive” which idea is already conveyed by the adjective “devoid of all thought-determinations” (Kalpanāpodha). The Vaiśeṣika maintains that an object qualified by five real

<sup>1</sup> अभिसम्बुद्धतत्त्वास्तु प्रतिक्षणविनाशिनम् ।

<sup>2</sup> हेतूनां नियमं बुद्ध्वा प्रारभस्ते शुभाः क्रियाः ॥ Ibid, K. 542.

<sup>3</sup> कार्यकारणभूताश्च तत्राश्रयिवादयो मताः ।

<sup>4</sup> बन्धस्तद्विगमादिष्टा मुक्तिर्निर्मलता धियः ॥ Ibid, K. 544.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, K. 350.

<sup>6</sup> प्रत्यक्षं कल्पनापोढं नामत्रात्यायसंयुतम् ।

Pramāṇa-Samuchchaya, i, 3.

Also Randle's "Fragments from Diñnāga", Fragment 'A'.

predicables—generality, particularity, relation, quality and action—is given in perception which has two moments, the first moment consisting of pure sensation (Ālochana-mātra) and the second moment consisting of determination. The Naiyayika develops this into his indeterminate (Nirvikalpa) and determinate (Savikalpa) perception. Dīnāga condemns these five predicables to be mere fictions of the intellect. The only object of perception is the unique momentary thing-in-itself shorn of all relations. Dharmakīrti reintroduces the adjective “non-illusive” in the definition of perception because he thinks it necessary to exclude the sense-illusions like the perception of the double-Moon as distinguished from the illusions of thought. He therefore defines perception as devoid of all thought-determinations and illusions.<sup>1</sup> Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla agree with Dharmakīrti and define perception as devoid of illusion and determination which is the conceptual content.<sup>2</sup>

### *Exposition of Inference :—*

Inseparable connection or Vyāpti is the nerve of inference. In inference an object is cognized through its ‘mark’ or a valid ‘middle term’ which has three characteristics—(1) it is present in the *probandum* (Anumeya), (2) it is also present in that which is like the *probandum*, and (3) it is absent in that which is not like the *probandum*. Inference for another is a syllogism. The Nyaya syllogism has five members : (1) Thesis, (2) Reason, (3) Example with inseparable connection, (4) Application, and (5) Conclusion. Dīnāga and his followers reject Thesis, Reason, and Conclusion and retain only two—(1) Example with Inseparable Connection or the General Rule, and (2) Application which includes Reason and Conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> प्रत्यक्षं कल्पनापोढमभ्रान्तम् । Nyāyabindu, i, 3.  
Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iii, 123.

<sup>2</sup> अभिलापिनी प्रतीतिः कल्पना । Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 1214.



Prof. Dhruva has shown that Diñnāga cannot be credited with the invention of Vyāpti as "the doctrine was held by Nyāya and Vaisheṣika writers long before the time of Diñnāga."<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that for Diñnāga and his followers the validity of inference is only on the phenomenal plane. Inference has no reference to ultimate reality which is indescribable and beyond all thought-determinations. "This whole business of *probans* and *probandum*", observes Diñnāga, "depends on the relation of quality and possessor of quality, a relation which is imposed by thought; and it has no reference to an external existence and non-existence."<sup>2</sup> "Vāchaspati Mishra quotes a Buddhist who remarks that these relations considered as objective realities are unfair dealers, who buy goods without ever paying any equivalent."<sup>3</sup>

Inference is the work of intellect. Although ultimately it has no reference to Reality, yet in the phenomenal world its authority is unquestionable. Refuting the charge of Bhartṛhari that inference may be invalidated on account of the difference in condition, place and time and that an inference which is held true by some may be found false by others of more developed intellect, Shāntarakṣita remarks that a true inference can never be invalidated by any body.<sup>4</sup> Similarly Dharmakīrti also remarks that fire shall always be inferred from smoke.<sup>5</sup> Shāntarakṣita says that those who deny the validity of inference involve themselves in self-contradiction because by their denial they pre-suppose the validity of inference as they

<sup>1</sup> Nyāya-Pravesha : Prof. Dhruva ; Introduction, p. xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> सर्वोऽयमनुमानानुमेयभावो बुद्धचारुदेन धर्मवर्गिभावेन न बहिः सदसत्त्वमपेक्षते । Fragment 'O'.

<sup>3</sup> Buddhist Logic ; Stcherbatsky, p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> Tattvasaṅgraha ; K. 1477.

<sup>5</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iv, 53.

desire that their intention should be inferred from their words.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of other Pramāṇas*:—The Svatantra-Vijñānavādins maintain the validity of perception and inference only. All other Pramāṇas can be either reduced to these two or they are no Pramāṇas at all. Verbal Testimony (Shabda) is valid only if it can be tested at the touch-stone of reason. Analogy (upamāna) is a combination of perception and memory. Implication (Arthāpatti) can be easily reduced to Inference. For example, we can say:

All fat persons who do not eat during day, eat during night. (Major Premise)

Devadatta is a fat person who does not eat during day. (Minor Premise)

Therefore fat Devadatta eats during night. (Conclusion).

Negation (Abhāva) is either a non-entity or else it is included in Perception. Other Pramāṇas are no Pramāṇas at all.

*Criticism of the Veda*:—The Mīmāṃsaka maintains that the Veda is eternal. Words, meanings and their relationship are all eternal. The injunctions and the prohibitions of the Veda are all that we need. The Veda has neither a before nor an after; therefore it is authorless and eternal. Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla bitterly criticize this view: The Mīmāṃsaka says that ignorance, jealousy, hatred etc. which are the causes of the unreliability of words are found in persons. Words of persons, therefore, are unreliable. The Buddhist retorts that knowledge, non-jealousy non-hatred etc. which are the causes of the reliability of words are found in persons. Words of persons, therefore, are reliable.<sup>2</sup> It is only a person who can

<sup>1</sup> Tattvasaṅgraha, K. 1456.

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 227.



speak or write or understand words. The Veda itself cannot reveal its meaning. It is indeed a wonder that there are people who can uphold such a clearly absurd view that because we do not remember the authors of the Veda, therefore the Veda is not the creation of persons! Fie on the pitched darkness of ignorance which pervades this world! This view can be valid only for the blind followers who are ignorant of logic.<sup>1</sup> By this logic many other works also whose authors are not known will have to be regarded as authorless. And absolute reliability shall have to be attached to those words of heterodox outsiders, the origin of which cannot be traced, and to those horrible customs of the Mlechchhas or the Pārasikas, like marrying one's own mother or daughter, the origin of which is not remembered.<sup>2</sup> Again, if the Mīmāṃsaka thinks it his right to give peculiar meanings to such ordinary words like 'Svarga', 'Urvashī'. etc. which occur in the Veda, then who can reasonably check us if we proclaim that this sentence of the Veda—'One who desires heaven should perform sacrifice', means that 'One should eat the flesh of a dog' or that 'Buddha is omniscient'?<sup>3</sup> The argument that because some sentences of the Veda are true therefore the entire Veda is true is clearly wrong because some sentences, even of a trustworthy person, may be wrong while some sentences, even of an untrustworthy person, may be it right. It is only the true words of trustworthy persons which do not contradict our experience that should be recognized as the Āgama.<sup>4</sup> If the Mīmāṃsaka is really eager to establish the authority of the Veda, he should try to

<sup>1</sup> श्रोत्रियाणां त्वक्मपोज्यमज्ञातन्यायवर्त्मनाम् ।

Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 247.

Tattva-Sangraha, K. 1509.

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 247; Svavṛtti, p. 456. Tattva-Sangraha, K. 2447.

<sup>3</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 320, 322; Tattva-Sangraha, K. 3527.

<sup>4</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 317.

prove that the Veda is the work of some faultless author of supra-normal vision who has risen above all ignorance. Indeed, right words embodying truth and goodness, and emanating from persons highly intelligent and merciful do claim validity.<sup>1</sup>

The authority of inference is unquestionable in this world. An inference firmly rooted in facts cannot be set aside by the so-called 'Revealed Word'.<sup>2</sup> The words of the Shāstra, the truth of which is proved by reasoning and the true words of any other trustworthy person including one-self, are of equal validity.<sup>3</sup> Dharmakīrti says: in respect to those things the truth of which can be proved by perception or inference, even if we ignore the Shāstra there is absolutely no harm. And in respect to those things, the truth of which cannot be verified by perception or inference, the Shāstra too is impotent.<sup>4</sup> Who has made it a rule that for everything one should take recourse to the Shāstra and that without the authority of the Shāstra one should not infer fire from smoke? By whom are the simple-minded innocent persons, unable to know the truth or falsehood by themselves, deluded to the belief that for everything they should fall back on the Shāstra? By whom, alas! are these terrible fetters of the Shāstra imposed upon the innocent folk?<sup>5</sup> A husband with his own eyes saw his wife in an undesirable position with another person. When he rebuked her, she cried addressing her friends—'Oh friends, see the

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 2400, 3123, 2402.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 2439.

<sup>3</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iv, 93.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, iv, 106.

<sup>5</sup> केनेयं सर्वचिन्तासु शास्त्रं ग्राह्यमिति स्थितिः ।

कृतेदानीमसिद्धान्ते ग्रह्यो धूमेन नानलः ॥

रिक्तस्य जन्तोर्जातस्य गुणदोषमपश्यतः ।

विलब्ध्वा वत ! केनामी सिद्धान्तविषमग्रहाः ॥ Ibid, iv, 53-54.



utter folly of my husband. He relies on his bubble-like eyes and refuses to believe the words of his faithful wife! To have blind faith in every word of the Shāstra even at the expense of perception and inference is like believing a corrupt woman at the cost of one's own eyes.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of the Categories of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika:—*

A substance (Dravya) is neither the same as nor different from its qualities (Guṇa). When we perceive anything, say a cloth, we see only the qualities like colour, length, breadth, thickness, smoothness etc., we do not see any material substance.<sup>2</sup> There are also no 'wholes' or 'composite objects' apart from parts. Only parts are real because we perceive only parts, attributes, qualities. Without seeing the dewlap, horns, hoofs etc, we do not see 'the cow.' If ten pieces of gold are heated into a lump, there is no difference in the weight. If the 'whole' has anything besides the parts, the weight of the lump should have increased. And if the 'whole' is nothing over and above the parts, then the ten different pieces of gold should be called a lump.<sup>3</sup>

Again, if there are eternal atoms, then because they always remain the same, all things should be produced from them either now or never, either all at once or not at all. The laymen imagine a 'mass', a 'composite object' a 'whole'; and people who do not understand the real nature of reality, on the basis of this 'mass' assume atoms. In fact the word 'substance' and the word 'atom' are only conventional; we may give the name "Lord" to a beggar!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika-Svavṛtti, p. 613.

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iii, 202, 335; Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 565.

<sup>3</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iv, 154-158.

<sup>4</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 552, 603, 604.

The six categories and their properties cannot be related. The relation between them can be neither of conjunction which is restricted to substance, nor of inherence.<sup>1</sup> When 'substance' does not exist, then qualities etc. which depend on it also do not exist. The relation of inherence too by which the qualities are supposed to be related to the substance is a myth.

The category of action (Karma) is also unreal because things being momentary have no time to move. And if things are permanent, they cannot move. If motion is the essence of mover, rest is impossible; if motion is the essence of non-mover, motion is impossible. If a thing moves at one time and does not move at another, then it will be two different things. Thus whether things are momentary or permanent, says Shāntarakṣita, motion is in both cases an impossibility.<sup>2</sup>

Because there are no 'substances' there can be no specific particulars (Viśeṣa). They are mere moments.

Inherence (Samavāya) is supposed to be the relation between the parts and the whole and it is held to be eternal because its cause is not known. But parts do not exist apart from the whole and there is no whole over and above its parts. If cloth is different from threads then it should appear in potsherds also; and if cloth is not different from threads the latter should be called cloth. Again, if inherence is eternal, then all things should become eternal.<sup>3</sup>

The refutation of the categories of substance, qualities and motion implies the refutation of the category of 'Universal' (Sāmānya) which is supposed

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 574-575.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 692-707.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 835, 836, 854.



to reside in the above three categories. The Universal in a mere figment of the imagination. Dinnāga says: "It is great dexterity that what (the universal) resides in one place should, without moving from that place, reside in what comes to exist in a place other than that place. It is joined with this thing (which is now coming into existence) in the place where the thing in question is ; and yet it does not fail to pervade the thing which is in *that* place. Is not this very wonderful? It does not *go* there—and it was not there before ; and yet it is there afterwards—although it is not manifold, and does not quit its former receptacle. What a series of difficulties."<sup>1</sup> Words, says Dharmakīrti, depend on mere usage. Reality is the individual cows ; 'the universal cow' is a figment of the imagination. The reality of the absolutely dissimilar individuals is covered by the imagined universal. The universal therefore is the result of the covering' (saṃvṛti) of the intellect.<sup>2</sup> It is only a practical necessity. If every individual was to be named, names would have enormously increased. This work would have been impossible too. Moreover, it would have been fruitless. Therefore in order to differentiate similar individuals of a so-called community from individuals of other communities, the wise persons resorted to conventional names and coined the Universal.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Shāntarakṣita also says that the universal is a mere convention. People use the term 'cow' (Go) in respect of an object which serves the purpose of yielding milk etc. Thus a convention in regard to that term is established. It is a mere name.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Randle : Fragments from Dinnāga, Frg. Q. ; Translation Randle's.

न याति न च तत्रासीदस्ति पशूनां न चांशवत् ।  
ब्रूयति पूर्वं नाधारमहो ! व्यसनसंततिः ॥

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 69-71.

Ibid, i, 70.

<sup>3</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 139.

<sup>4</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 727-728.

Reality is the unique and absolutely dissimilar particular thing-in-itself. Intellect, words, names, concepts cannot even touch it. The whole business of the *probandum* and the *probans*, of substance and qualities, of unity and difference, belongs to the empirical reality, not to the absolute momentary thing-in-itself. Reality neither gets united nor does it differ. It cannot be the object of discursive intellect. Reality is one particular thing-in-itself; how can intellect which is diversity grasp it?<sup>1</sup> It cannot be grasped by names and concepts for it transcends language and intellect.<sup>2</sup> No object of finite thought will resist ultimate scrutiny. It is because the intellect cannot even touch Reality, that the wise persons have declared that the more an object of intellect is dialectically examined the more will it give way.<sup>3</sup>

*Exposition of the Doctrine of Apoha :—*

Diñnāga says that all words, all names, all concepts are necessarily relative and so unreal. A word can be described only negatively. It can express its meaning only by rejecting the opposite meaning. A 'Cow' means a 'not non-cow.' Names give us universals which are purely imaginary. Names, therefore, are illusory and negative. They do not touch Reality which is real and affirmative though ultimately it transcends both affirmation and negation, nay, all categories of the intellect. Dharmakīrti too has

<sup>1</sup> *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, i, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 129, 136; iv, 183-184.

संसृज्यन्ते न भिद्यन्ते स्वतोर्थाः पारमार्थिकाः ।

रूपमेकमनेकं च तेषु बुद्धेरुपप्लवः ॥ *ibid*, i, 88.

<sup>2</sup> नाभिधानविकल्पानां वृत्तिरस्ति स्वलक्षणम् ।

सर्वं वाग्वोचरातीतमूर्तियेन स्वलक्षणम् ॥

*Tattva-Saṅgraha*, K. 734.

<sup>3</sup> इदं वस्तुबलायातं यद् वदन्ति विपरिचितः ।

यथा यथार्थाश्चिन्त्यन्ते विशीर्यन्ते तथा तथा ॥

*Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, iii, 209.



repeatedly stressed that the thing-in-itself is beyond language and intellect and that names and concepts are pure imagination. They express themselves only through negation. Shāntarakṣita also observes that conceptual notions and verbal expressions have no real basis. Their only basis is the purely subjective imagination.<sup>1</sup> The very essence of unique existents is that the object of a word is never apprehended. Neither the thing-in-itself, nor the universal, nor the relation to the universal, nor something which possesses the universal, nor the form of the cognition of the object can really be called the import of words. The thing-in-itself cannot be denoted by words for it is beyond all convention, language and intellect. And others are only a figment of the imagination.<sup>2</sup>

The Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas say that the Buddhists in maintaining that the word 'cow' denotes the universal 'negation of the non-cow' admit, by this very expression, the reality of the universal 'cow' as an entity. In fact, non-existence implies existence and negation necessarily pre-supposes affirmation. The cognition of the meaning of words is always positive; it is never of the nature of Apoha. If the negation of a negation is different from it then it is a positive thing; if not, then cow becomes the same as the non-cow.

Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla in refuting these objections remark :—Negation is of two kinds; (1) Relative negation or exclusion (Paryudāsa), and (2) Absolute negation or denial (Niṣedha). Relative negation too is of two kinds; (a) due to difference of idea (Buddhyātma), and (b) due to difference of object (Arthātma).<sup>3</sup> In fact, things are absolutely

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 869; Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 870-872.

<sup>3</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 1004.

dissimilar, yet on account of certain well-defined potencies (Niyata-Shakti) some of them become the basis of the conception of similarity. On account of this basis there arises a *reflection* (Pratibimbaka) in cognition which is wrongly grasped as 'an object.' Apoha is the conception of this reflection. The denotative function of the word consists only in the production of this reflection. When this reflection is cognized, the 'exclusion of other objects' follows by implication (Sāmarthyā). The notion of 'other objects' is not a part of the reflection. Thus only the relative negation is directly cognized while the absolute negation is indirectly cognized by implication. Thus we see that there is no affirmation without negation.<sup>1</sup>

Apoha is the denotation of the word; the positive universal is a false creation of the intellect. Truly speaking, words are neither synonymous nor not-synonymous because they denote neither unity nor plurality. In fact unity and plurality belong to real things only. Exclusions are cognized by conceptual contents which are the result of conventional ignorance. And these conceptual contents only, not things, differ among themselves. Things-in-themselves are neither unified nor diversified; it is only the conceptual content that appears as diverse.<sup>2</sup> The object 'cow' and the object 'non-cow' both are separate realities. Their reality is well-established. It is only the word which is unreal because it depends on the pure whim of the person using it. Words do not cognize external objects. They cognize only their own reflections. And on account of the force of ignorance words mistake their own internal reflections to be external objects. This is all that they can do. Words cannot even touch the object. No

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 1005-1006, 1011-1020.

<sup>2</sup> नैकात्मतां प्रपद्यन्ते न निश्चन्ते च स्रष्टवः ।

स्वलक्षणात्मका अर्था विकल्पः प्लवते त्वसी ॥

Ibid, K. 1047, 1049. Also *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, i, 88.



object can be denoted as qualified by Apoha.<sup>1</sup> Words can reflect individuals only and so the individuals may be denoted by words. But words cannot reflect universals. So universals can be neither denoted nor excluded by words. And even if they are excluded they cannot become real. When a thing excludes another, it is called its Apoha. But by this, neither the thing becomes negative nor does the Apoha really become positive.<sup>2</sup> Thus the 'cow' which is a 'negation of the non-cow' is a positive entity and is different from the non-cow. But from the phenomenal stand-point, Apohas are recognized as positive and so they cannot be taken to be mere non-entities. From the ultimate stand-point however there can be no object which may be denoted by Apoha for there is neither that which denotes nor that which is denoted. Things being momentary, all this business is impossible.<sup>3</sup>

*Criticism of the Primordial Matter (Prakṛti) of Sāṅkhya:—*

The Sāṅkhya maintains the existence of an eternal Prakṛti, Pradhāna or Avyakta, because all individual things are limited and finite, because they imply a common cause, because one eternal Matter transforms itself into various evolutes, because there is a distinction between cause and effect and because the unity of the universe points to a single cause. The effect, therefore, must pre-exist in the cause. Five reasons are adduced for the doctrine of Satkārya-vāda : (1) The non-existent, like the sky-lotus, cannot be produced ; (2) the cause is always implied ; (3) everything cannot be produced by everything ;

<sup>1</sup> अवेद्यबाह्यतत्कापि प्रकृष्टोपप्लवादियम् ।

स्वोत्प्लेखं बाह्यरूपेण शब्दधीरध्यवस्यति ॥

एतावत् क्रियते शब्दैर्नार्थं शब्दाः स्पृहन्त्यपि ।

नापोहेन विशिष्टश्च कश्चिदर्थोऽभिधीयते ॥

Ibid, K. 1066-1067. Also Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 80, 136.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 1082.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 1089.

(4) the efficient alone can produce that for which it is efficient ; and (5) the effect is the essence of the cause.

Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla criticize this doctrine as follows : The arguments adduced by Sāṅkhya against Asat-kāryavāda can be urged with equal force against its Satkāryavāda. We can say that the effect does not pre-exist in the cause because (1) the existent cannot be produced as its production will be a vain repetition ; if curd pre-exists in milk then milk should taste like curd ; (2) because there is nothing to be produced, there can be no implication of the cause and so (3) no specific cause ; (4) no efficient cause ; and (5) no essence or operation of the cause.<sup>1</sup>

To us Asat-kāryavāda too is a misnomer. We do not advocate the production of a non-entity. What is produced is a thing itself which, before its production, was non-existent. Reality itself is efficient causation. Production means 'becoming a thing.' This production has no connection with existence or non-existence. It is related only to a non-existent concept. The seed of this conception is the fact that a thing which exists for one moment only was non-existent in the preceding moment. Production is the 'own essence' of a thing which exists for one moment only, irrespective of all connection with the past and the future. In fact there is no non-existent entity which can be produced ; the view that the non-existent is produced is therefore purely imaginary.<sup>2</sup>

Again, even if the three qualities are admitted, the existence of an eternal Prakṛti is not proved. An eternal is inefficient and can never be a cause. Then creation should be simultaneous. If accessories are

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 16-21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 32-33 ; Pañjikā, pp. 32-33.



admitted, then either they, and not the eternal Matter, are the causes or else they are useless.<sup>1</sup> Again, it is highly absurd that Prakṛti knows only to perform and not to enjoy. Again, according to our view every thing cannot be produced out of everything because the potency in the causes varies. So without taking recourse to Prakṛti, we can explain the diversity in effects and causes by diversity in the potencies.<sup>2</sup>

*Criticism of God (Ishvara) :—*Dharmakīrti says that an eternal God cannot be regarded as the cause of this world. To Chaitra, a weapon causes a wound and a medicine heals that up. Both the weapon and the medicine are regarded as causes because they are momentary and capable of successful activity. God is neither momentary nor is He efficient. If the opponent is so fond of taking an inactive and inefficient entity like God to be the cause of this world, he should better hold a dry trunk of a tree as the cause of this universe. God is eternal and so He cannot change. And unless He changes, He cannot be a cause. Moreover, it is difficult to understand as to why an eternal God should acquire the power to become the cause only at a particular time when He starts the creation. An effect arises from a combination of causes and conditions. Now, if any other thing except that particular combination is wrongly regarded as the cause of that effect, then infinite regress is bound to creep in. We shall have to search for a cause of God Himself and then another cause of that cause and so on *ad infinitum*. The argument of the opponent that creation implies the Creator, just as a pot implies a potter is answered by Dharmakīrti by pointing out that though an effect pre-supposes a cause, yet all effects do not pre-suppose the same cause otherwise from fog we shall infer fire and even an ant-hill will be regarded as the work of a

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 19-20 ; Also *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, I, 166-167.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 45.

potter. The capacity to produce an effect lies in a combination of causes, not in eternal things like God.<sup>1</sup>

Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla also point out that when there are no composite objects in this world, how can there be an Intelligent Being who is supposed to produce them? It is like proving that an ant-hill is the creation of a potter. Even objects like houses, stair-cases, gates, towers etc. are made by persons who are many and who have fleeting ideas. If the opponent means only this that all effects presuppose an intelligent cause, we have no quarrel with him because we also maintain that this diverse universe is the result of intelligent actions. We only refute his one Intelligent and Eternal Creator. Logically his eternal Creator should have His own cause and this cause should have another cause and so on *ad infinitum*. Again, either God is a non-entity like a sky-lotus and so incapable of producing anything, or else the entire creation should be simultaneous. If God depends on accessories, He is not independent; If He does not, then creation should be simultaneous.<sup>2</sup>

Again, why should God create this world at all? If He is determined by some one else, He is not free. If he is prompted by compassion, He should have made this world absolutely happy and not full of misery, poverty, grief and pain. Moreover, before creation there were no objects for whom compassion might have been felt by god. Again, if He is guided in creating and destroying this world by good or bad actions of persons, then he is not free. If He creates the world through sport, then He is not even master of His own amusement as He depends on His playful instincts. If creation is due to His very existence or

<sup>1</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, ii, 12-28.

<sup>2</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 56-87.



nature, then there must be simultaneous production. If He has no power to create in the beginning, He cannot acquire it afterwards. If it is said that like a spider gradually producing webs out of its very nature, God also gradually produces this world out of His very nature it is wrong, because a spider does not by its very nature, produce webs. What produces them is the saliva which comes out of the mouth of the spider on account of its eager desire to eat insects. If it is said that creation emanates from God unintentionally, then how can God be called intelligent? Even a fisherman thinks twice before he acts.<sup>1</sup>

The arguments which refute Prakṛti and Ishvara, also refute their *joint causality* as admitted by Yoga.

Nor can creation be *at random* without any cause. Even the lotus and its filaments, sharpness of thorns, beauty of peacock-feathers etc. are caused by seeds, earth, water etc.<sup>2</sup>

*Criticism of Brahman*:—If it is maintained that Brahman in itself is an undifferentiated unity and appears as diversity only because of Ignorance, then we urge, say Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla, that this unity is neither proved by perception nor by inference. Moreover, Brahman cannot even produce a cognition, for consciousness is successive and momentary. Brahman is therefore like the son of a barren woman. Again, if Brahman is always of the nature of Pure Self-consciousness, then Ignorance and its result bondage are impossible. All persons without the least effort on their part will be emancipated. Again, if Ignorance is regarded as the essential nature of Brahman, then liberation will be impossible. Again, Ignorance cannot be viewed as something apart from and independent of Brahman for then the monism

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 156-169.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 113-115; Also Pramāṇa-Vārtika, ii, 180-182.

will be destroyed. Further, it is improper to describe Ignorance as 'Indescribable', or even as something which can be described 'neither as existent nor as non-existent,' because in order to be an entity, Ignorance must be either existent or non-existent. Again, because Brahman is one, so bondage of one means the bondage of all and liberation of one means the liberation of all.

For us, on the other hand, Ignorance is a disposition or force of false attachment. For us bondage means a series of defiled cognitions produced by Ignorance, while liberation means a series of pure cognitions produced by Right Knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

### *Criticism of the Self (Ātman):*

(a) *Of the Self of the Followers of the Upaniṣads:* The Advaitins who follow the Upaniṣads<sup>2</sup> maintain that one eternal Consciousness is the only reality which illusorily appears as subject and as object. Shāntarakṣita says that this view contains only a very slight error and that error is that this Pure Self which is Pure Consciousness is regarded as *eternal*.<sup>3</sup> We perceive only changing cognitions and so, apart from them there is no eternal cognition. If there were only one eternal consciousness, then how can the diverse cognitions be explained? They too will have to be cognised all at once. If ultimate reality is one eternal consciousness, then all distinction between wrong and right knowledge, between bondage and liberation will be wiped off. And all Yogic practices for right knowledge and consequent liberation will be useless.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 144-151, 544; Also Pañjikā, 74-75; Also Pramāṇa-Vārtika, ii, 202-205.

<sup>2</sup> अद्वैतदर्शनावलम्बिनश्चौपनिषदिकाः । Pañjikā, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> तेषामल्पापराधं तु दर्शनं नित्यतोक्तितः । Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 330.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, K. 328-335.



(b) *Of the Self of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*: This School maintains that our ideas must have a self which knows them and in which all our desires, feelings and ideas inhere. Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla point out that knowledge does not require a knower for its illumination, nor do desires, feelings and ideas require a receptacle like material things, for they are regarded as immobile by the opponents. Consciousness itself when associated with the notion of the Ego is called the Self. It has only phenomenal reality. Ultimately it denotes nothing.<sup>1</sup> Desires, feelings and ideas are momentary and arise in succession like the material seed, sprout and creeper etc. They do not need any permanent self to inhere.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *Of the Self of Mīmāṃsā*:—Kumārila maintains that just as a snake remains a snake, though sometimes it may assume a coiled and sometimes a straight posture, similarly the self is essentially of the nature of eternal and pure Consciousness, though it may pass through many phases of feelings, volitions and thoughts. Self-consciousness proves the existence of the Self and the fact of recognition repudiates the No-soul theory. To this the Buddhists object that if the Self is regarded as one eternal Consciousness, then all cognitions will have to be regarded as one and eternal. Kumārila replies that the diversity of cognitions is due to the diversity of objects. Just as fire which has the nature of burning burns only those combustible objects which are presented to it or just as a mirror or a crystal, though it has the power to reflect, reflects only those objects which are put before it, similarly the Self, though it is of the nature of eternal consciousness, apprehends only those sense-data which are presented to it by sense-organs. The Buddhists retort that if cognitions

<sup>1</sup> अहंकाराश्रयत्वेन चित्तमालम्बेति गीयते ।

संवृत्त्या, वस्तुवृत्त्या तु विषयोऽस्य न विद्यते ॥ Ibid, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 191-217.

are influenced by the changing functions of the sense-organs and the sense-objects, they cannot be regarded as one and eternal. Moreover, the diversity of cognitions in dreams and hallucinations where there is no objective counterpart will not be explained. Again, if fire burns all combustible objects, then the whole world will be at once reduced to ashes. Again, a mirror or a crystal which is itself momentary is only an apparatus to produce an illusory image. Again, if the changing feelings, volitions and thoughts etc. are identical with the Self, then the Self will not be permanent; and if they are different from the Self, then how can their change affect the Self? Again, the simile of the snake is also wrong. The snake becomes coiled etc. because it is itself momentary. Had it been permanent like the Self it could have never changed. In fact the Self or the ego-notion is due to beginningless ignorance. There is no apprehender of the notion of the 'I'. Hence there is no knower. Recognition is based on the false notion of memory and it cannot prove the existence of the Self.<sup>1</sup>

(d) *Of the Self of Sāṅkhya*:—Sāṅkhya also maintains that the Self is pure and eternal consciousness and is different from buddhi or the faculty of cognition. Against this view it is urged by the Buddhists that if the Self only enjoys what is reflected in buddhi, then are these reflections identical with or different from the Self? If identical, then the Self should also change with the reflections; if not, then the Self cannot enjoy them. Again, if actions belong to buddhi while fruits belong to the Self, then the charge of vicarious suffering stands. Again, if it is said that Prakṛti and Puruṣa work together like the blind and the lame, and that Prakṛti gives fruits to Puruṣa according to his desires, then how is it that many times an intense desire for a thing is felt but the desired thing is absent? Again, at the time

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 241-283.



of enjoyment, if there is modification in the Puruṣa, he is not eternal; and if there is no modification in him, he cannot be the enjoyer and Prakṛti can be of no help to him. Moreover, if Prakṛti brings about this diverse creation in accordance with the Self's "desire to see", then how can Prakṛti be called Unconscious? To hold that Prakṛti only knows to prepare delicious dishes but does not know to eat them is highly absurd.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed intellect, volition, consciousness, knowledge, sentience are all synonyms. There is no harm if Consciousness is described as the Self. We only object to its being called *eternal*.<sup>2</sup>

(e) *Of the Self of the Jainas* :—The Jainas like the Mīmāṃsakas maintain that the Self is Consciousness. But they regard it as an Identity-in-difference. As substance (Dravya) it is identity and is inclusive (Anugamātmaka); and as "successive factors" (Paryāya), it is diversity and is exclusive (Vyāvṛttimat), just as a Man-Lion (Nara-Siṃha), though one, has a double nature. But this view is absurd. Either pure identity alone or pure difference alone can be logically maintained. Both cannot exist side by side in the same entity. Man-lion too is not of a double nature. He is only an aggregate of fleeting atoms.<sup>3</sup>

The shameless and naked Jainas, says Dharmakīrti, make such non-sensical and contradictory remarks that Reality is both existence and non-existence, unity and plurality, inclusion and exclusion. If it is so then curd is curd as well as a camel. Then, when a person is asked to eat curd, he should run to eat a camel!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 288-300.

<sup>2</sup> चैतन्ये चात्मशब्दस्य निवेशेऽपि न नः क्षतिः ।

नित्यत्वं तस्य दुःसाध्यमव्यादेः सफलत्वतः ॥ Ibid, K. 302, 305.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 311-327.

<sup>4</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, I, 182-185.

(f) *Of the Self of the Vātsīputrīyas* :—These Hinayānists, says Shāntarakṣita, even though they call themselves Buddhists (Saugatammanyāh), uphold the Self under the name of the Pudgala and declare it to be neither identical with nor different from the five skandhas, to be neither real nor unreal and hence to be indescribable. They should know that the Pudgala is like a sky-lotus; it is ultimately unreal. In order to be an 'entity' a thing must be either real or unreal. Only a non-entity like a sky-lotus can be called 'indescribable'.<sup>1</sup> Efficiency or successful activity is the definition of existence. Only a momentary thing can be efficient and therefore real. The indescribable cannot be called an existent entity. Great persons like Vasubandhu etc. have successfully explained the seeming contradictions in the scripture by pointing out that the apparently contradictory teachings of the Merciful Buddha are due to his Excellent Skill, that he provisionally taught the existence of the Pudgala only to remove the false notion of non-existence.<sup>2</sup>

*Criticism of External Objects and Exposition of the Doctrine that Reality is Pure Consciousness :—*

Diñnāga in his Ālambana-parīkṣā criticizes the atoms of the Vaibhāṣikas and of the Vaisheṣikas and the arguments used by him are similar to those used by Vasubandhu in his Viṃśatikā. Consciousness is the only reality. The so-called external objects do not exist independently and outside of consciousness. Consciousness manifests itself as the subject as well as the object. The so-called external object is only the 'knowable-aspect' (Grāhya-bhāga) or the 'object-condition' (Ālambana-pratyaya) of consciousness. Its *objectivity* is not denied for it is said to appear as *object* to the knowing subject. Only its objectivity does not fall outside of consciousness. The opponent

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 339.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 348.



objects that if the object is a part of consciousness and appears simultaneously with it, then how can it be a condition to consciousness itself? Dinnāga answers this by pointing out that the object, the essence of which is consciousness and which is only the knowable-aspect of consciousness, appears *as if* it is something external and also serves as a condition to consciousness because of its invariable association with consciousness and also because of its transmitting the force in succession. The sense-organ is only the force in consciousness which force acts as an auxiliary cause to enable consciousness to manifest itself. This force is not something opposed to consciousness for it is inside consciousness itself. Thus the object which is only the knowable-aspect of consciousness and the sense-organ which is only the force of consciousness go on determining each other from beginningless time.<sup>1</sup>

Dharmakīrti also asserts that an object is nothing but relative existence and the latter is nothing but dependence on causes and conditions. The form in which consciousness manifests itself under causes and conditions is called an 'external object'.<sup>2</sup> The diversity among intellects is due to the different mental dispositions (Saṃskāra) or forces (Vāsanā), and not to the so-called plurality of external objects.<sup>3</sup> When it is proved that consciousness itself appears as an object, Dharmakīrti says that he himself does not know through what beginningless ignorance an external object is taken to be real!<sup>4</sup> Indeed to those whose vision is blurred by magic, small round potsherds look like coins and pebbles look like diamonds!<sup>5</sup> It is only when philosophers, like elephants, close their eyes

<sup>1</sup> यदन्तर्ज्ञेयं हि बहिर्वदवभासते । Ālambana-Paṭikṣā, K. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, iii, 224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, iii, 336.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, iii, 353.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, iii, 355.

from the ultimate reality and descend on the phenomenal plane that they take external objects as a practical necessity.<sup>1</sup> Reality is Pure Consciousness. It manifests itself internally as subject and externally as object. But the distinction between internal and external is *within* Consciousness itself. Consciousness is a unity. Its manifestation as subject and object is therefore only an appearance, not reality.<sup>2</sup> The subject-aspect and the object-aspect of Consciousness are mutually relative. One without the other is unreal. Reality which is this non-dual Pure Consciousness ultimately transcends the subject-object duality.<sup>3</sup> Everything which can be defined, which can be brought under the categories of intellect is an appearance and does not fall outside the subject-object duality. Appearances, therefore, are declared to be unreal because they are indefinable.<sup>4</sup> It is only through Ignorance that the Non-dual Pure Consciousness appears as the duality of the subject and the object.<sup>5</sup> Like the external object, the internal subject is also unreal. It is the ego-notion and is the root-cause of all suffering.<sup>6</sup> The real Self is Self-luminous Consciousness; all impurities are adventitious.<sup>7</sup>

Shāntaraksita and Kamalashila call themselves Nirākāra-Vijñānavādins or the upholders of Formless Consciousness. Shāntaraksita frankly confesses that the fact that Pure Consciousness is the ultimate reality

<sup>1</sup> तदुपेक्षिततत्त्वार्थः कृत्वा गजनिमीलनम् ।

केवलं लोकबुद्धयैव बाह्यचिन्ता प्रतन्यते ॥ Ibid, iii, 219.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, iii, 212.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, iii, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, iii, 215.

<sup>5</sup> अविभागोऽपि बुद्धपात्मा विपर्यस्तितदर्थैः ।

बाह्यबाह्यकसंवित्तिभेदवानिव लक्ष्यते ॥ Ibid, iii, 254.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, ii, 196.

<sup>7</sup> प्रमास्वरमिदं चित्तं प्रकृत्यागन्तवो मलाः । Ibid, ii, 208.



has been clearly established by eminent Āchāryas like Vasubandhu in his *Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi* and like Dīnāga in his *Ālambana-parīkṣā*, and that so far as ultimate reality is concerned he is following the same path.<sup>1</sup> Whether consciousness arises as formless (*Anirbhāsa*) or with form (*Sanirbhāsa*) or with something else (*Anyanirbhāsa*), the fact is that it can never cognize any external object for the simple reason that such object does not really exist.<sup>2</sup> Consciousness needs nothing else for apprehension. Self-consciousness means the necessarily non-unconscious character of consciousness. It means that knowledge is essentially self-luminous. The objection of Kumārila that though cognition is illuminative yet it needs a potent external object for its function of apprehension is answered by pointing out that there is no distinction between cognition and its function, that cognition means apprehension of the object and that therefore it needs neither any other function nor any external object.<sup>3</sup>

Consciousness ultimately transcends the subject-object duality. It is 'without a second' (*Advaya*). It needs neither a knowing subject nor a known object. It is essentially self-luminous.<sup>4</sup> The objection of Bhadanta Shubhagupta that for proving that Consciousness is the ultimate reality the argument given is that consciousness is essentially consciousness, which is no argument at all, is answered by pointing out that consciousness is essentially self-luminous and no external object can be regarded as self-luminous. External object, therefore, cannot be real. It is only a knowable-aspect of consciousness which on account of ignorance appears *as if* it is something external.

<sup>1</sup> विज्ञप्तिमात्रतासिद्धिर्धीमद्भिर्विमलीकृता ।

अस्माभिस्तद्दिशा यातं परमार्थविनिश्चये ॥

Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 2084.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 2017, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, K. 2079.

Though a part of consciousness, it becomes a condition to consciousness because it is invariably associated with it.<sup>1</sup> Pure Consciousness is self-luminous and by its very nature is the essence of true knowledge. All impurities come from outside. Consciousness, therefore, is essentially self-consciousness because it is self-luminous and free from all impositions.<sup>2</sup> Consciousness really transcends the subject-object duality. Neither the subject nor the object is ultimately real. The Buddhas have therefore declared consciousness to be free from these two aberrations. Who will entertain a wrong notion about consciousness unless he be confused with duality and determination?<sup>3</sup> This pure Consciousness is in fact the Pure Self. True knowledge consists in the realization of this Pure Self. (Vishuddhātma-darshana) and it arises when it is known that Ultimate Reality is Pure Consciousness which is devoid of all adventitious impurities.<sup>4</sup> This is the Highest Truth taught by the Buddha, the Expounder of Truth. It is the cause of all Prosperity and Ultimate Good. It is the true Dharma for the wise people have declared that to be Dharma from which Prosperity and Ultimate Good result. It has not been realized by the Non-Buddhist Keshava (of the Gītā) and others.<sup>5</sup>

### *Exposition of the Buddha :—*

With all religious fervour, Dharmakīrti salutes the Buddha whom he declares to be Pure Consciousness transcending all categories of the intellect (Vidhūtakalpanājāla); from whom rays of Conscious-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, K. 2082-2083.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 3435, 3437.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 3536, 3538.

<sup>4</sup> एतदेव हि तज्ज्ञानं यद् विशद्धात्मदर्शनम् ॥

आगन्तुकमलापेतचित्तमात्रत्ववेदनात् ॥ Ibid, K. 3535.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, K. 3486, 3540.



ness burst forth in every direction (Samantasphuraṇatvit); who is Pure Existence (Dharmakāya); who is Deep and Pure Bliss (Gambhīrodāra-mūrti, i. e. Sambhogakāya); and who is full of compassion on all sides (Samantabhadra, i. e. Nirmāṇakāya).<sup>1</sup> But in strict conformity with his acute logic he is forced to say that the Buddha is absolutely reliable, not because he is omniscient, but because he possesses true knowledge, because he knows and prescribes the means to achieve true knowledge to realize what is good and what is bad.<sup>2</sup> Dharmakīrti thus denies omniscience even to the Buddha. The Buddha is reliable because he possesses true knowledge (Jñānavān), because he is full of compassion (Kāruṇikāḥ) and because he is overwhelmingly kind (Dayāvān). His words are not false because, having realized true knowledge and the right path, he has prescribed them for all to practice.<sup>3</sup> A reliable person should be neither omniscient nor farsighted. Omniscience in this world is impossible and if far-sightedness is to be the criterion of truth, then let us all adore the vultures!<sup>4</sup>

Shāntarakṣita however, strongly differs from Dharmakīrti on this point and emphatically declares the Buddha to be Omniscient. The Mīmāṃsaka argues that an omniscient Being is impossible. One cannot know even all the atoms and the hair of one's body, how can one claim to know everything? Of course one may call him "All-knowing" (Sarvavit) who knows the meaning of the word "All" (Sarva)! Moreover, if Buddha is omniscient, why not Kapila? And if both, why the difference between their teachings? It is possible for more intelligent persons to know something more but not everything. By practice

<sup>1</sup> Pramāṇa-Vārtika, i, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, ii, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, ii, 145-146.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, ii, 33.

one may jump about 15 feet in the sky ; but surely one cannot jump over 8 miles, though practise one may for innumerable times. It is said that the Buddha is like the Chintāmaṇi Jewel and when he sits in meditation, even the walls freely proclaim his teachings. Such absurd statements can be believed only by those who have blind faith. We are not blind followers. We want reasons.<sup>1</sup>

The objections of the Mīmāṃsaka are answered by Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla thus :—

It is wrong to say that because the Omniscient Being is not perceived therefore he does not exist. Mere non-apprehension cannot prove the non-existence of a thing. Even if his existence is not proved there should be *only doubt* about his existence, not certainty about his non-existence.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we maintain that an omniscient Being exists. He cannot be perceived by ordinary people. How can a person perceive the Omniscient unless he himself becomes Omniscient. Only the saints can directly realize him. Or the Omniscient Being, being Self-luminous, Himself sees Himself.<sup>3</sup>

We do not propound the existence of the Omniscient Being merely on the authority of the scripture. When the inferential mark is present why should recourse be taken to verbal testimony?<sup>4</sup> In fact, omniscience is nothing else than the highest stage of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The young one of a regal swan cannot even come out of its nest. But through practice it can fly even across the ocean. Similarly a man by

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 3269, 3270, 3311.

<sup>2</sup> सर्वार्थविषयं ज्ञानं यस्य दृश्यः स ते कथम् ।  
सर्वार्थविषयं ज्ञानं तवापि यदि नो भवेत् ॥ Ibid, K. 3276.

<sup>3</sup> स्वयमेवात्मनाऽऽत्मानमात्मज्योतिः स पश्यति । Ibid, K. 3290.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, K. 3510.

<sup>5</sup> Pañjikā, p. 908.



acquiring true knowledge through constant yogic practices can become the Buddha. The Buddha for our benefit has proclaimed the doctrine of Nairātmya which is the unique Gateway to Bliss and which frightens the wrong doctrines. One who has realized this truth cannot be tainted with any defect, for defect and truth, like darkness and light, are opposed to each other. And when there is no defect and no attachment, all 'coverings' of ignorance are removed and consequent Omniscience is realised and Oneness with the Buddha is attained.<sup>1</sup> When the truth that Consciousness is the only reality and that ultimately there is no object (Dharma-Nairātmya) and no subject (Pudgala-nairātmya) is realized, the cycle of birth-and-death comes to a stand-still. This state is called Apavarga.<sup>2</sup>

The Merciful Buddha who is the true friend of all, has taught the right doctrine to everybody without making any distinction of any kind.<sup>3</sup> The wise Brāhmaṇas pay their respects to the Omniscient Buddha.<sup>4</sup> The real Brāhmaṇas are those who have removed all their sins by practising the teaching of Nairātmya and they are to be found in the religion founded by the Enlightened Sage.<sup>5</sup> The spurious Brāhmaṇas, unable to defend their wrong views by means of sound arguments fall back upon the authority of the Veda. The Great Buddha, on the other hand, confident of his power to expound the right doctrine through reasonable arguments, curbing the arrogance of the maddened elephant-like opponents, fearlessly roars like a lion in the following manner :—‘O Bhikṣus, accept my words not out of

<sup>1</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha, K. 3322, 3338-3339. Ibid, K. 3322.

Ibid, K. 3339.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, K. 3488, 3491, 3539, 3492.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, K. 3569.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, K. 3512.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, K. 3589.

mere respect for me, but after testing them at the touch-stone of reason, just as gold is accepted as true by the wise after heating, cutting and rubbing against the touchstone'.<sup>1</sup>

which is the unique Gateway to the Kingdom of Heaven. One who has reached this state cannot be shaken with any doubt for defect and truth, like darkness and light, are opposed to each other. And when there is no defect and no attachment, all 'strivings' of reason are removed and consequent 'Contradictions' vanish and One's mind is purified. When the mind is purified, it is the only reality and that ultimately there is no object (Dharma-Vastavya) and no subject (Buddha-vastavya) is reached, the state of Nirvana. This state is called Arhatyā.

The Merciful Buddha who is the true friend of all, has taught the right doctrine to everybody without making any distinction of any kind. The wise Buddhists pay their respects to the Omnipotent Buddha. The real Buddhists are those who have removed all their bias by accepting the teaching of Nirvana and there are to be found in the religion founded by the Enlightened One. The spiritual Buddhism must be placed their wrong views by means of sound arguments. All rest upon the authority of the Veda. The Great Buddha, on the other hand, through the power of his power to expand his right doctrine through his noble arguments ending the ignorance of the materialistic philosophy of the

यैः पुनः स्वीकृतिषु स्पष्टं युक्तावैतत्वं विनिश्चितम् ।

तत्प्रत्यायनसामर्थ्यमात्मनश्च महात्मभिः ॥

कुतरीर्यमसमातंगमदग्लानिविषायिनम् ।

एवमस्ताखिलत्रासाः सिद्धान्तं नदन्ति ते ॥

"तापाच्छेदान्च निकषात् सुवर्णमिव पण्डितैः ।

परीक्ष्य भिषावो ग्राह्यं मद् वचो न तु गौरवात् ॥"

Ibid, K. 3586-3588.



## CHAPTER V

### PRE-SHANKARA VEDĀNTA

The Upaniṣads, the Brahma-Sūtra and the Gītā are called 'Prasthāna-traya' or the three basic works of Vedānta on which almost every great Ācharya has commented.

Just as the various schools of Mahāyāna recognize the Māhayāna-Sūtras as the Āgama which embody the real teachings of the Buddha and just as their teachings were summarised by Ashvaghōṣa, the first systematic expounder of the Mahāyāna, and were developed into a full-fledged school of Shūnyavāda by its first systematic expounder, Nāgārjuna, similarly the Upaniṣads are regarded as the shruti by the Vedāntins and their teachings were summarized by Bādarāyaṇa in his Brahma-Sūtra and were developed into the school of Advaita Vedānta by its first systematic expounder, Gauḍapāda.

The Māṇḍūkya-Kārikās or the Gauḍapāda-Kārikās also known as the Āgama-Shāstra are the first available systematic treatise on Advaita Vedānta. There can be no doubt that Gauḍapāda's philosophy is essentially based on the Upaniṣads, particularly on the Māṇḍūkya, the Brhadāranyaka, and the Chhāndogya. Probably he has also drawn upon the Brahma-sūtra and the Gītā. There can also be no doubt that Gauḍapāda is much influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism—by Shūnyavāda and Vijñānavāda. In fact it can be correctly stated that Gauḍapāda represents the best that is in Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. Tradition says that Gauḍapāda was the teacher of Govindapāda who was the teacher of Shaṅkarāchārya. Shaṅkara himself most respectfully salutes Gauḍapāda as his "grand-teacher who is the

respected (teacher) of (his) respected (teacher)",<sup>1</sup> and quotes from and refers to him as the "teacher who knows the tradition of the Vedānta".<sup>2</sup> Śhaṅkara's disciple Sureshvara also refers to him as the "Revered Gauḍa".<sup>3</sup>

The long-accepted traditional view that the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda are a commentary on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is challenged by Mm. Pt. Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya. His thesis is that "(i) The Kārikās in Book I are not the exposition of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad. (ii) The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is mainly based on the Kārikās, and not *vice versa*. (iii) And as such the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is later than the Kārikās".<sup>4</sup>

To us all the arguments which Pt. Bhattacharya gives in support of his thesis seem to be entirely unconvincing. His arguments may be summarized thus :

- (1) Madhva regards only Book I as Shruti and thinks that the other three Books form a separate work or works which are not commented upon by him.
- (2) The Kārikās do not explain many important and difficult words in the Māṇḍūkya.
- (3) The Māṇḍūkya has drawn upon other Upaniṣads and upon the Kārikās.
- (4) By comparing some prose passages of the Māṇḍūkya with some Kārikās, it becomes clear that the prose passages are later developments.

<sup>1</sup> यस्तं पूज्यान्निपूज्यं परमगुरुममुं पादपातेनैतोज्जस्मि ।

Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya : Last Verse.

<sup>2</sup> अत्रोक्तं वेदान्तसम्प्रदायविद्विराचार्यैः । सम्प्रदायविदो वदन्ति ।

Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, 1. 9. Ibid : I. 4. 14.

<sup>3</sup> एवं गोडेंद्राविडैनः पूज्यैरर्थः प्रभाषितः ।

Naiṣkarmya-siddhi ; IV, 44.

<sup>4</sup> The Āgama-Shāstra of Gauḍapāda: Introduction, p. XLVI.



The first argument can be answered by pointing out that Shaṅkara and Sureshvara who are Advaitins and who flourished long before Madhva who is a Dvaitin, do not regard the Kārikās as Shruti. Pt. Bhattacharya adduces no sound reasons as to why we should believe Madhva against Shaṅkara and Sureshvara.

The second argument can be easily answered by pointing out that the Kārikās are a free commentary, almost an independent work which is based essentially on the Upaniṣad and hence it was not necessary for Gauḍapāda to explain every word occurring in the Māṇḍūkya text.

In answer to the third argument we say that we also admit that the Māṇḍūkya has much similarity with the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and the Chhāndogya, and we add that many passages which occur in these two Upaniṣads also occur in Upaniṣads other than the Māṇḍūkya, and even if we grant that the Māṇḍūkya is later and has drawn upon earlier Upaniṣads, it does not mean that it has drawn upon the Kārikās also.

In answer to the fourth argument we say that by comparing the prose passages of the Māṇḍūkya with the Kārikās we find just the opposite to be the case. The prose passages appear to be earlier ones. Moreover, we may also add that generally scholars have regarded the prose passages of the Upaniṣads to be earlier than the verse portions.

Another contention of Pt. Bhattacharya is that "these four Books are four independent treatises and are put together in a volume under the title of the Āgama-Shāstra".<sup>1</sup> This contention too is untenable. To support his view Pt. Bhattacharya gives these arguments:—

- (1) If Book II is supported by reasoning, is there no reasoning at all in Book I?

<sup>1</sup> Ibid ; Introduction, p. LVII.

- (2) Does one find in Book II anything improper, non-sensical, unintelligible or incomplete without assuming its connection with Book I? No.
- (3) There is nothing against one's thinking that Book III too is an independent work.
- (4) Certain things like Ajātivāda, already indicated in Book I and discussed in Book III, are again discussed in Book IV. Why should the author of Book IV indulge in such a useless action?

In answer to these arguments we say that because Gaudapāda uses independent arguments in Book II, should he be debarred from using reasoning in Book I? If there is nothing unintelligible in Book II without the help of Book I, how can it necessarily mean that Book II is an absolutely independent work? Even in the works of many modern scholars there are chapters which may be read by themselves. The third argument, being purely negative, is no argument at all. In answer to the fourth argument we urge that repetition is not always useless. An author may consider repetition necessary in order to emphasize some important points. The difficulty with Pt. Bhattacharya seems to be that he expects strictest unity and utmost homogeneity of presentation from Gaudapāda as he may expect from a reputed scholar of the 20th century. Moreover, we maintain that there is a considerable unity running through the different Books of the Āgama-Shāstra.

The chief merit of Pt. Bhattacharya's work is to point out the similarities between Gaudapāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Though we differ from Pt. Bhattacharya on certain grave points of interpretation, we generally agree with him so far as these similarities are concerned. We agree with him in maintaining that Gaudapāda was much influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially by Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu.



Pt. Bhattacharya is perfectly right in remarking : "It is true that he (Gauḍapāda) advocates the Vijñānavāda, but certainly it is originally adopted by him from the Upaniṣadic source...Upaniṣadic seed of idealism being influenced by its elaborate system in Buddhism and the vast literature on it by the Buddhist teachers who flourished before Gauḍapāda, has developed into what we now find in the Āgama-shāstra...it must be accepted that it did not first originate with the Buddhists, though it has much developed in their system later on".<sup>1</sup> But he does not develop this point; rather he sometimes seems to forget this. And therefore we differ from him on one important point of emphasis. By pointing out the similarities between Gauḍapāda and Mahāyāna, Pt. Bhattacharya's aim, more or less, has been to prove that Gauḍapāda is a Crypto-Buddhist, while our aim, on the other hand, is to prove that Mahāyāna and Advaita are not two opposed systems of thought but only different stages in the development of the same thought which originates in the Upaniṣads, and that Gauḍapāda's philosophy as well as Mahāyāna so far as Gauḍapāda agrees with it, both are rooted in the Upaniṣads, and that therefore instead of dubbing Gauḍapāda as a Crypto-Buddhist it will be far truer to dub the Mahāyānists as crypto-Vedāntists. We shall pursue this point later on.

The fundamental doctrine of Gauḍapāda is the Doctrine of No-origination (Ajātivāda). Negatively, it means that the world, being only an appearance, is in fact never created. Positively, it means that the Absolute, being self-existent, is never created (Aja).

Gauḍapāda agrees with Shūnyavāda in maintaining that origination, from the absolute standpoint is an impossibility. He examines the various theories of creation and rejects them all. Some say that creation

<sup>1</sup> The Āgama-Shāstra of Gauḍapāda : Introduction,

is the expansion (Vibhūti) of God; others maintain that it is like a dream (Svapna) or an illusion (Māyā); some believe that it is the will (Ichchhā) of God; others declare that it proceeds from Time (Kāla); still others say that it is for God's enjoyment (Bhoga); while some maintain that it is God's sport (Kṛidā). All these views are wrong. What desire can God have who has realized all desires? Essentially therefore creation is but the very nature of God. It is His inherent nature. It flows from Him. It simply emanates from Him.<sup>1</sup> In fact there is no creation at all. If this world of plurality really existed, it would have surely come to an end. Duality is only an appearance; non-duality is the real truth.<sup>2</sup> To those who are well-versed in Vedānta the world appears only as a dream or an illusion or a castle in the sky or a city of the Gandharvas.<sup>3</sup> From the ultimate standpoint there is neither death nor birth, neither disappearance nor appearance, neither destruction or production, neither bondage nor liberation; there is none who works for freedom, none who desires salvation, and none who has been liberated; there is neither the aspirant nor the emanipated—this is the highest truth.<sup>4</sup> There is neither unity nor plurality. The world cannot be regarded as manifold by its very nature. It is neither one nor many—thus the wise know it.<sup>5</sup> The imagination of the Ātman

<sup>1</sup> Māndūkya-Kārikā : I, 7-9.

देवस्यैष स्वभावोऽयमाप्तकामस्य का स्पृहा ? Ibid : I, 9.

<sup>2</sup> मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतमद्वैतपरमार्थतः । Ibid : I, 17.

<sup>3</sup> स्वप्नमाये यथा दृष्टे मन्थर्वनगरं यथा ।

तथा विश्वमिदं दृष्टं वेदान्तेषु विचक्षणैः ॥ Ibid : II, 31,

Compare Saddharma : p. 142, Aṣṭasāhasrikā : pp. 39, 40, 205; Laṅkāvatāra : pp. 90-96, 105; Lalitavistara : p. 181; Samādhirāja : p. 27 Mādhyamika-Kārikā : XXIII, 8; XVII, 33; VII :

<sup>4</sup> न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न वदो न च साधकः ।

न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥ Ibid : II, 32.

Compare Mādhyamika-Kārikā : Opening Verse.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid : II, 34.



as different things and the imagination of different things themselves which in fact do not exist, depend on the Non-dual Absolute or the Pure Ātman, just as the imagination of a snake in the case of a rope-snake depends upon the rope. The Absolute alone, therefore, is blissful.<sup>1</sup>

Reality is No-origination. It always remains the same. It is the complete absence of misery. If we know this we shall at once understand how things which in fact are never born, yet appear as if they are born. The Absolute is Non-dual. There is no difference at all.<sup>2</sup> When sometimes the Upaniṣads declare the creation as distinct from its cause and give the illustrations of earth, iron and sparks etc., they do so only as a means (Upāyaḥ so'vatārāya) in order to make us understand the supreme end of No-origination.<sup>3</sup> Jagat is not different from Jīva and Jīva is not different from Ātman and Ātman is not different from Brahman. The non-dual Absolute appears as diverse only on account of illusion. The Unborn can never tolerate any distinction. If it really becomes diverse then the immortal would become mortal. The dualists want to prove the birth of the Unborn. But the Unborn is Immortal and how can the Immortal become mortal? The Immortal can never become mortal and the mortal can never become Immortal. Ultimate nature can never change.<sup>4</sup> The Shruti declares: 'There is no plurality here' (Neha Nānāsti kiñchana; Br. IV. 4, 19 and Kāṭha II. 1, 11); 'The Lord through His power appears to be many' (Br. II. 5, 19); and 'The Unborn appears to be born as many' (Ajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate). It is to be known, therefore, that the Unborn

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 33.

<sup>2</sup> उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कश्चन । Ibid : III, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : III, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : III, 19-21; IV, 6-7.

प्रकृतेरन्यथाभावो न कश्चिद् भविष्यति । Ibid, III, 21, IV-7.

Compare Mādhyamika-Kārikā : XIII, 4.

appears to be born only through illusion. In fact He is never born. By declaring that 'those who are attached to creation or production or origination (*sambhūti*) go to utter darkness' (*Isha*, 12), the Shruti denies creation; and by declaring that 'the unborn does not take birth again, who, then, can indeed produce Him?' (*Br. III*, 9, 28), the Shruti denies the cause of creation.<sup>1</sup>

Not only by Shruti, but also by independent reasoning can it be proved that ultimately nothing originates. He who maintains the birth of the existent accepts the absurd position that that which is already existent is being born again. And the non-existent can never be born at all. Verily, the son of a barren woman can be born neither through illusion nor in reality. The doctrine of No-origination, therefore, is the ultimate truth.<sup>2</sup>

Dualists, says Gaudapāda, quarrel among themselves. Some say that it is the existent which is born, while others say that it is the non-existent which is born. Some say that nothing originates from Being, while others say that nothing originates from Not-being. We do not quarrel with these dualists because these disputants, taken together, proclaim, like the non-dualists, the doctrine of No-origination.<sup>3</sup> These disputants want to prove the birth of the Unborn. But how can the Unborn be born? How can the Immortal become mortal? Ultimate nature cannot change. It is self-proved, self-existent, innate and uncaused. All things by their very nature are free from decay and death. Those who believe in decay and death, fall low on account of this wrong notion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, III, 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, III, 27-28, 48. Compare *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, I, I; I, 7; *Mādhyamika-Vṛtti*, pp. 13, 36, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, IV, 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, IV, 10. Compare *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, XI, 3-8.



There are some (i.e. the Shūnyavādins) who uphold *Advayamāda* and reject both the extreme views of being and not-being, of production and destruction, and thus emphatically proclaim the doctrine of No-origination. We approve, says Gaudapāda, of the doctrine of No-origination proclaimed by them.<sup>1</sup>

Sāṅkhya maintains that the effect pre-exists in the cause and that causation consists in the manifestation of the permanent cause (*avyakta*) as the changing effects (*vyakta jagat*). Gaudapāda objects that if the cause is produced, how can it be unborn? If it becomes the changing 'many', how can it be changeless and permanent? Again, if the effect is identical with the cause, then the effect too should be immortal and the cause too should be mortal. How can the permanent cause be identical with the changing effect and still be permanent?<sup>2</sup> Verily, adds Shaṅkara in his Commentary, one cannot cook half a portion of a hen and at the same time reserve another half for laying eggs.<sup>3</sup> Again, if the effect does not pre-exist in the cause it is like a hare's horn and cannot be produced. Again, cause and effect cannot be simultaneous, for then the two horn of a bull will have to be regarded as causally related.<sup>4</sup> Again, those who maintain that the cause precedes the effect and the effect also precedes the cause, maintain the absurd position that a son also begets his father.<sup>5</sup> Therefore nothing can be produced.

Nothing can originate because:

- (1) there is *lack of energy* in the cause to produce the effect. Cause must have some energy to produce the effect otherwise everything can be produced from everything or nothing can be produced from anything. This energy

<sup>1</sup> स्वाव्ययानामत्राति तैरनुमोदानहं वयम् । Ibid, IV, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, IV, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Kārikās, IV, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Commentary on IV, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid : IV, 15.

- can belong neither to that which is existent nor to that which is non-existent nor to that which is both nor to that which is neither ;
- (2) there is *absence of knowledge* of the beginning and the end. The effect which is neither in the beginning nor in the end must be non-existent in the middle also ; and
- (3) there is *incompatibility of the order of succession*. Antecedence and consequence are unproved. We cannot say which of the two is prior and is therefore the cause.

Thus, says Gauḍapāda, have *the Buddhas*, the Enlightened, clarified the doctrine of No-origination. Causality is therefore an impossibility.<sup>1</sup> It cannot be proved that Saṃsāra is without a beginning, but has an end, nor can it be proved that Mokṣa has a beginning, but has no end.<sup>2</sup> In truth, because it is the Unborn which appears as if it is born, therefore No-origination is the very nature of the Unborn. That which exists neither in the beginning nor in the end, cannot exist in the middle also ; that which is unreal in the past and in the future must be unreal in the present too.<sup>3</sup> Origination is impossible because neither the existent nor the non-existent can be produced either by the existent or by the non-existent.<sup>4</sup>

Gauḍapāda also agrees with the Vijñānavādins in maintaining that the world is ultimately unreal, for it cannot exist independently and outside of Consciousness

<sup>1</sup> अशक्तिरपरिज्ञानं क्रमकोपोऽयं पुनः ।

एवं हि सर्वथा बुद्धैरजातिः परिदीपिता ॥ Ibid : IV, 19.

Compare the arguments of Shūnyavādins. See supra, pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : IV, 30 ; Compare Mādhyamika-Kārikā : XI, 1 ; XVI, 10.

<sup>3</sup> आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा । Ibid : II, 6 ; IV, 31.  
Compare Mādhyamika-Kārikā : XI, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : IV, 40. Compare Mādhyamika-Kārikā : 1, 7.



which is the only Reality. Even Śhaṅkara says that Gauḍapāda accepts the arguments of the Vijñānavādins to prove the unreality of the external objects.<sup>1</sup>

Ordinary people, says Gauḍapāda, cling to the view that this world exists, because they say that things are perceived and because there is practical utility. They are always afraid of the doctrine of No-origination. It is for such ordinary people that *the Buddhas*, the Enlightened, from the phenomenal standpoint, have proclaimed origination. But from the ultimate standpoint, perception and practical utility are invalid arguments to prove the reality of the world because even in a magical elephant and dream-objects both perception and practical utility may be found.<sup>2</sup>

The Sarvāstivādins refute the Vijñānavādins and advocate the existence of external objects. They say that cognition must have its objective cause otherwise the distinction between the subject and the object will be impossible. The external objects must exist because cognition and suffering depend (*para-tantra*) upon them. This is the view of Sarvāstivāda (*para-tantra*).<sup>3</sup> The Vijñānavādins reply that the upholders of external objects want to prove that cognition must have a cause. But the objective cause which they adduce is no cause at all. The object exists as an object for the knowing subject ; but it does not exist outside of consciousness because the distinction of the subject and the object is within consciousness itself. Consciousness is the only reality and it is never related to any external object, neither in the past nor in the present nor in the future.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> विज्ञानवादिनो बोद्धस्य वचनं बाह्यार्थवादपक्षप्रतिषेधपरं आचार्येणानुमोदितम् । Commentary on IV, 27.

<sup>2</sup> उपलंभात् समाचारादस्तिवस्तुत्ववादिनाम् ।  
जातिस्तु देशिता बुद्धेरजातेस्त्वसतां सदा ॥ Ibid IV, 42.

<sup>3</sup> प्रज्ञप्तोः सनिमित्तत्वमन्यथा द्वयनाशतः ।  
संक्लेशस्योपलब्धेश्च परतन्त्रास्तिता मता ॥ Ibid : IV, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : IV, 25-27.

Gaudapāda is in complete agreement with the Vijñānavādins here. The external world is unreal because it does not exist always, as Reality must do. It is also unreal because the relations which constitute it are all unreal; because space, time and causality are impossible. It is also unreal because it consists of objects and whatever can be presented as an object is unreal. Reality is the Pure Self which is Pure Consciousness and which is at the background of everything. The waking state and the dreaming state are on a par. Both are equally real within their own orders. The water in a dream can quench the thirst in a dream as much as real water can quench real thirst. And both are equally unreal from the ultimate standpoint.<sup>1</sup> The self-luminous Self through its own power of illusion imagines itself by itself and it is this Self which cognizes the manifold objects. This is the established conclusion of Vedānta.<sup>2</sup> Just as in darkness, a rope is imagined to be a snake, similarly the self is imagined to be individual subject and to be internal and external objects. And just as when the rope is known, the imagined snake vanishes, similarly when the non-dual Ātman is realized, the subject-object duality vanishes at once.<sup>3</sup> The luminous Self through its own power of illusion becomes itself infatuated.<sup>4</sup> It is Consciousness itself which throbs as the subject and as the object in dream as well as in waking. This whole universe, this entire duality of the subject and the object is therefore only the imagination of the Self. Neither the individual mind nor the external object is ultimately real. Those who see the creation of the individual self or of the external object see the foot-prints of birds in the sky.<sup>5</sup> The external objects are not the creation

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 4-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : II, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> मायैषा तस्य देवस्य यया संमोहितः स्वयम् । Ibid : II, 19.

<sup>5</sup> हस्मान् न जायते चित्तं चित्तद्वयं न जायते ।

तस्य पश्यन्ति ये जातिं ख वै पश्यन्ति ते पद्म् ॥ Ibid : IV, 28.



of the individual mind for both are only manifestations of Consciousness. That which has empirical existence cannot be called ultimately real. Consciousness which is immanent in the subject and in the object, yet transcends them both. It transcends the trinity of knower, known and knowledge. Consciousness is really *Asaṅga*; it has no attachment or connection or relation with anything else. It is called 'Unborn' (*Aja*) from empirical standpoint only. From the ultimate standpoint, it cannot be called even 'Unborn' for it is really indescribable by intellect.<sup>1</sup> Realizing the truth of No-origination, one bids good-bye to all sorrow and desire and reaches the fearless goal.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that Gaudapāda agrees with Vijñānavāda in maintaining that Reality is Pure Consciousness which manifests itself as and ultimately transcends the subject-object duality. We shall see in the next Chapter that Śhaṅkara bitterly criticizes Vijñānavāda. Much of the criticism of Śhaṅkara loses its force against Vijñānavāda and Gaudapāda since they do not deny the objectivity of the external world, but only deny its existence outside of consciousness. Śhaṅkara himself in a sense admits this. But his view represents a definite advance on Vijñānavāda and on Gaudapāda. He emphasizes that the dream-state and the waking-state are not on a par. He wants to prove the unreality of the external world not by saying that it does not fall outside of consciousness, but by saying that it is essentially indescribable as existent or as non-existent (*sadasadanirvachaniya*). What we want to stress here is that this view is not an altogether new creation of Śhaṅkara. Its germ is present in Gaudapāda himself. This fact has been overlooked by many

<sup>1</sup> चित्तं निर्विषयं, नित्यमसंज्ञं तेन कीर्तितम् ।

अजः कल्पितसंवृत्या परमार्थेन नाप्यजः ॥ Ibid : IV, 72, 74,

Compare with Asanga and Vasubandhu ; see Supra : pp. 62, 67, 72, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, IV, 78.

scholars. Gaudapāda also says that the world is unreal because it is essentially indescribable or unthinkable either as existent or as non-existent. He says that just as a moving fire-brand appears as straight or curved, similarly consciousness, when it moves, appears as the subject-object duality. And just as an unmoving fire-brand produces no illusion, similarly unflinching knowledge produces no subject-object illusion. The appearances in a moving fire-brand are not produced by anything else; and when the fire-brand does not move, the appearances also do not rest in anything else; nor do they enter into the fire-brand; nor do they go out of it. Similarly the manifold phenomena are not produced by anything other than Consciousness nor do they rest in anything else; nor do they enter into it; nor do they go out of it. They are mere appearances. And they are so because *they are essentially indescribable or unthinkable*, because they can be called neither real nor unreal, neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>1</sup> It is this seed present in Gaudapāda which was later on developed by Śaṅkara. This fact is strengthened by Gaudapāda's agreement with Shūnyavāda, by his doctrine of No-origination, by his maintaining that the world is neither existent nor non-existent nor both.

Now we proceed to deal with Gaudapāda's own contribution. It is his doctrine of Vaishāradya or Asparshayoga or Amanībhāva. Even this doctrine was hinted at by the Buddhists.<sup>2</sup> But it is essentially based on the Upaniṣads and its development is Gaudapāda's own.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, IV, 47-52. Ibid, IV, 52.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Āryadeva says :

नह्यस्पर्शवतो नाम योगः स्पर्शवता सह । Chaturshataka, 333.

The Vijñānavādins prescribed various practical rules for Amanībhāva or for the transformation of relational intellect into Pure Consciousness.



Taking his stand on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the Chhāndogya and the Māṇḍūkya, Gauḍapāda identifies the Unborn and Non-dual Absolute with the Ātman or Brahman or Amātra or Turiya or Advaita which can be directly realized by Pure Reason or Asparshayoga or Vaishāradya or Amanibhāva. This Absolute manifests itself in three forms, in Jāgrat, Svapna, and Suṣupti, as Vishva, Taijasa and Prājña.<sup>1</sup> In reality it transcends all the three forms. It is the Turiya or the Fourth. It is the Measureless or the Amātra. Praṇava or Aumkāra is its symbol. In fact there is no distinction between the symbol and the symbolized. Praṇava itself is the Brahman, the Fearless Goal. It is the cause as well as the effect. It is phenomenal as well as noumenal, saguṇa as well as nirguṇa, apara as well as para. It is the shining Self or the self-luminous Consciousness.

It is called Vishva (All) when it has the consciousness of outside; it is called Taijasa (Luminous) when it has the consciousness of inside; and it is called Prājña (Intelligent) when it is concentrated consciousness. These correspond to the waking state, dream state and deep sleep state respectively. Vishva enjoys the gross; Taijasa enjoys the subtle; Prājña enjoys the bliss. Vishva and Taijasa are both causes and effects; Prājña is only the cause. Turiya is neither cause nor effect. It is Ishana, Prabhu or Deva. It is all-pervading capable of removing all sufferings, lord of all, changeless, non-dual, luminous, one without a second. Prājña knows no objects and so it cannot be called even the subject. It is a mere abstraction. It knows nothing, neither itself nor others, neither truth nor falsehood. But Turiya being pure and self-luminous Consciousness is All-seeing. Though duality is absent in Prājña and in Turiya, yet Prājña is connected with deep sleep where the seed of ignorance is present,

<sup>1</sup> बहिष्प्रज्ञो विभुर्विश्वो ह्यन्तःप्रज्ञस्तु तैजसः ।  
अन्तःप्रज्ञस्तथा प्राज्ञ एक एव विद्यास्मृतः ॥ Ibid, 1.

while Turiya knows no sleep. Vishva and Taijasa are connected with dream or false knowledge (anyathā-grahana or vikṣepa) and with sleep or absence of knowledge (agrahana or āvarana or laya). Prājña is connected with sleep. In Turiya there is neither sleep nor dream. In dream we know otherwise; in sleep we do not know the truth. The so-called waking life is also a dream. When the negative absence of knowledge which is sleep, and the positive wrong knowledge which is dream and waking, are transcended, the Fourth, the Goal is reached.<sup>1</sup> The fearless light of the self-luminous Reason shines all round. When the individual self (jīva), slumbering in beginningless Ignorance, is awakened, then the Unborn, the Dreamless, the Sleepless, the Non-dual Absolute (Ātman) is realized.<sup>2</sup> It moves nowhere; there is no going to or coming from it. It is the Lord immanent in the universe abiding in the hearts of all. He alone is a sage (muni) who has embraced this infinite and measureless Aumkāra which is the cessation of all duality and which is all bliss.<sup>3</sup> All categories of the intellect are merged in it. All plurality of the phenomena ceases here. It is realized by the sages who have known the essence of the Vedas and who are free from fear, anger and attachment.<sup>4</sup>

Ātman is like space; the individual souls are like space in jars. When the jars are destroyed, their spaces merge into Space. So do the jivas merge into the Ātman when Ignorance is destroyed by Right Knowledge. Just as if a particular space in a particular jar is contaminated with dust, smoke etc., all other spaces in all other jars do not become so contaminated, similarly if a particular jīva is contaminated with happiness or

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, I, 1-15,

<sup>2</sup> अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते ।

अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ॥ Ibid : I, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : I, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : II, 35.



misery etc., all jivas do not become so contaminated. Spaces in jars differ in forms, functions and names, but there is no difference in space, similarly jivas differ in forms, functions and names, but there is no difference in the Ātman. Just as the space in a jar is neither a transformation nor a modification nor a part of space, similarly a jiva is neither a transformation nor a modification nor a part of the Ātman. Ultimately there are no grades of reality, no degrees of truth. The same immanent Absolute is reflected in all pairs of objects related by sweet Reciprocity, in microcosm as well as in macrocosm, just as the same space is immanent in outside world as well as inside the stomach.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the Mahāyānists say that Buddha, on account of his excellent skill, preached the truth to suit the different needs of the shrāvakas, the pratyeka-buddhas and the bodhisattvas, similarly Gauḍapāda also says that the Merciful Veda prescribes three different spiritual stages (āśramas) for the three kinds of people, of lower middle and higher intellect. Karma and upāsana are taught to the lower and the middle while jñāna is taught to the higher.<sup>2</sup> It is only the dualists who quarrel with one another in order to strengthen their respective views. The Advaitin quarrels with none.<sup>3</sup> For the dualists, there is duality from the empirical as well as from the absolute standpoint. For us non-duality is the ultimate truth. For us there is non-duality (advaita) even between unity (advaita) and diversity (dvaita).<sup>4</sup> The neti neti of the Shruti is not solipsism. By negating all plurality and difference, the Shruti manifests the positive Unborn, the Absolute. The fact is

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : III, 3-12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : III, 16.

<sup>3</sup> स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थायु द्वैतिनो निश्चिता दृढम् ।  
परस्परं विरुध्यन्ते तैरयं न विरुध्यते ॥ Kārikās : III, 17.  
अद्वैतं परमार्थो हि द्वैतं तद्भेद उच्यते ।  
तेषामुभयथा द्वैतं तेनायं न विरुध्यते ॥ Ibid : III, 18.

that the Absolute cannot be grasped by the intellect and so the best method of describing the Indescribable is by negative terms. But all these negations point to the same Reality.<sup>1</sup> Duality is the creation of the intellect. When the intellect is transcended (*amanībhāva*), duality and plurality disappear.<sup>2</sup> This is Self-Consciousness, is devoid of all thought-determinations and imagination. It is Unborn and is not different from the Knowable. The Knowable (*Jñeya*) is the Brahman. It is calm and eternal Light. It is the fearless and unshakable Meditation (*Samādhi*). It is Asparsha-yoga or the Uncontaminated Meditation difficult to be realised even by great yogins. They are afraid of it, imagining fear where there is really no fear at all.<sup>3</sup> Verily, the absence of fear, the end of suffering, the perpetual wakefulness and the eternal peace, all depend upon the control of mind.<sup>4</sup> When both *laya* and *vikṣepa* are transcended, when the mind does not fall into sleep nor is it distracted again, when it becomes unshakable and free from illusion, it becomes Brahman.<sup>5</sup> The aspirant should be free from attachment, from misery and happiness alike. When the Brahman is realized there is a unique Bliss which transcends misery and happiness and which is called *Nirvāṇa*. It is indescribable, highest and unshakable. It is Unborn, non-dual and always the same. It can be realized by the Buddhas only.<sup>6</sup> The ignorant perceive only the four-fold 'covering' (*āvaraṇa*) 'is', 'is not', 'both is

<sup>1</sup> Ibid ; III, 26.

<sup>2</sup> मनसो ह्यमनीभावे द्वैतं नैवोपलभ्यते । Ibid : III, 31.

<sup>3</sup> सर्वाभिलाषविगतः सर्वचिन्तासमुत्थितः ।

सुप्रज्ञान्तः सकृज्ज्योतिः समाधिरचलोऽभयः ॥

अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम दुर्दशः सर्वयोगिभिः ।

योगिनो विभ्यति ह्यस्मादभये भयदर्शिनः ॥ Ibid : III, 37, 39.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : III, 40.

<sup>5</sup> यदा न लीयते चित्तं न च विक्षिप्यते पुनः ।

अनिर्गुणमनाभासं निष्पन्नं ब्रह्म तत्तदा ॥ Ibid : III, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid : III, 47. Ibid : IV, 80.



and is not', and 'neither is nor is not'. The Absolute appears to be obscured by these four categories (koṭi) of the intellect. In fact it is never touched by them. He who has transcended these categories and embraced Pure Reason, realizes the Absolute and becomes omniscient.<sup>1</sup> Omniscience results when the trinity of knowledge, knower and known is transcended. This is Transcendental Knowledge (Lokottaram Jñānam).<sup>2</sup> He who has realized this Omniscience, this non-dual Brahman, this Goal which befits a true Brāhmaṇa, what else can be desired?<sup>3</sup> All souls by their very nature are always in the state of enlightenment. They are all unborn. All elements of existence, subjective as well as objective, are by their very nature calm from the beginning, Unborn and merged in the Absolute. They are so because they are nothing else than the Brahman itself which is Unborn, Same and Transparent.<sup>4</sup> Those who move in difference can never acquire transcendental purity (vaishāradya). Their case is indeed pitiable.<sup>5</sup> We salute that Highest Reality, says Gauḍapāda, which is Unborn, Same, Pure, and Free from all traces of duality and plurality, according to the best of our ability.<sup>6</sup> He who has become the Buddha, the Enlightened, his knowledge (jñānam) is not related to anything (dharmēṣu na kramate), neither to the subject nor to the object, because it is supra-relational,

<sup>1</sup> कोट्यद्वयतन्त्र एतास्तु ग्रह्यसां सदावृतः ।

भगवानाभिरस्पृष्टो येन दृष्टः स सर्वदृक् ॥ Ibid : IV, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : IV, 88, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : IV, 85.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : IV, 91-93.

आदिशान्ता ह्यनुत्पन्नाः प्रकृत्यैव सुनिवृत्ताः ।

सर्वे धर्माः समाभिन्ना अजं साम्यं विशारदम् ॥ Ibid : IV, 93.

Compare Ratna-Megha-Sūtra as quoted in Mādhyamika-Vṛtti, p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> वैशारद्यं तु वै नास्ति भेदे विचरतां सदा ।

भेदनिम्नाः पृथग्वादास्तस्मात्ते कृपणाः स्मृताः ॥ Ibid : , 94.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid : IV, 100.

nor is anything (sarve dharmāḥ), neither the subject nor the object, related to his knowledge, because there is nothing outside his knowledge. He has transcended the duality of the subject and the object and the trinity of knowledge, knower and known. He has become one with Pure Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen how Gauḍapāda agrees with Shūnya-vāda and Vijñānavāda. In fact he represents the best in Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. He has great respect for Buddha. He says: Him, the Greatest of Men, who has known the truth that the individual souls (dharmāḥ) are identical with the pure Self (Jīveya), I salute.<sup>2</sup> Śhaṅkara explains that this Greatest of Men is Puruṣottama or Nārāyaṇa, the sage of Badarikāśhrāma, the first teacher of the Advaita School.<sup>3</sup> But this may also refer to Buddha.

Gauḍapāda uses many words which were frequently used in the Mahāyāna works. It may be pointed out that these words were not the monopoly of the Mahāyāna. They were the current philosophical coins of the day and Gauḍapāda had every right to use them. They were the heritage of the language. The impartial spirit of Gauḍapāda is to be much admired. His breadth of vision, his large-heartedness, his broad intellectual outlook and his impartial spirit add to his glory and greatness. He has respect for Buddha. He frankly admits that in certain respects he agrees with Shūnya-vādins and Vijñānavādins. But this should never mean that Gauḍapāda is a crypto-Buddhist. He is a thorough-going Vedāntin in and out. His mission is to prove that Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita

<sup>1</sup> क्रमते नहि बुद्धस्य ज्ञानं धर्मेषु तायिनः ।

सर्वे धर्मास्तथा ज्ञानं ..... ॥ Ibid : IV, 99.

<sup>2</sup> ज्ञानेनाकाशकल्पेन धर्मान् यो गगनोपमान् ।

ज्ञेयाभिन्नेन सम्बुद्धस्तं वन्दे द्विषदां वरम् ॥ Ibid : IV, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to the Commentary on Chapter IV, and Commentary on IV, 1.



Vedānta are not two opposed systems of thought, but only a continuation of the same fundamental thought of the Upaniṣads. He has based his philosophy on the Upaniṣads. When he says in the end "this truth was not uttered by Buddha",<sup>1</sup> what he means is that his own philosophy as well as the philosophy of Buddha and of the Mahāyāna so far as he agrees with it, both are directly rooted in the Upaniṣads, that Buddha preached this Upaniṣadic Truth not by words but by silence, that his (Gauḍapāda's) preaching is the essence of the Vedānta, that it is not an original contribution of Buddha or of Buddhists.

<sup>1</sup> नैतद् बुद्धेन भाषितम् । Kārikā, IV, 99.

## CHAPTER VI

### SHANKARA VEDĀNTA

To quote Dr. S. Radhakrishnan : "It is impossible to read Shaṅkara's writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration and profound spirituality...His philosophy stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after... whether we agree or differ, the penetrating light of his mind never leaves us where we were".<sup>1</sup>

Ultimate Reality, according to Shaṅkara, is Ātman or Brahman which is Pure Consciousness (Jñāna-Svarūpa) or Consciousness of the Pure Self (Svarūpa-Jñāna) which is devoid of all attributes (nirguṇa) and all categories of the intellect (nirviśeṣa). Brahman associated with its potency (shakti) māyā or mūlāvidyā becomes the qualified Brahman (saṅguṇa or savīṣeṣa or apara Brahma) or the Lord (Ishvara) who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this world which is His appearance.

Jīva or the individual self is a subject-object complex. Its subject-element is Pure Consciousness and is called the Sākṣin. Its object-element is the internal organ called the antahkaraṇa which is bhautika as it is composed of all the five elements, with the predominance of tejas which makes it always active except in deep sleep or states like swoon or trance. The source of the internal organ is Avidyā which causes individuality. In perception, the internal organ, when a sense-organ comes into contact with an object, assumes the 'form' of that object. It is the vṛtti or the mode of the internal

<sup>1</sup> Indian Philosophy : Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, pp. 446-447.



organ. This vṛtti inspired by the Sākṣin takes the form of empirical knowledge. In waking state, the internal organ is aided by the senses ; in dream state, it functions by itself ; and in deep sleep it is lost in its cause Avidyā. In this state too individuality persists because the Sākṣin is associated with Avidyā. In liberation, Avidyā is destroyed by Jñāna and the Sākṣin is realized as the Brahman which it always is.

Māyā or Avidyā is not pure illusion. It is not only absence of knowledge. It is also positive wrong knowledge. It is a cross of the real and the unreal (satyānṛte mithunī kṛtya). In fact it is indescribable. It is neither existent nor non-existent nor both. It is not existent for the existent is only the Brahman. It is not non-existent for it is responsible for the appearance of the Brahman as the world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent for this conception is self-contradictory. It is called neither real nor unreal (sadasadvilakṣana). It is false or mithyā. But it is not a non-entity like a hare's horn (tuchchha). It is positive (bhāvarūpa). It is potency (shakti). It is also called superimposition (adhyāsa). A shell is mistaken as silver. The shell is the ground on which the silver is superimposed. When right knowledge (pramā) arises, this error (bhrānti or bhrama) vanishes. The relation between the shell and the silver is neither that of identity nor of difference nor of both. It is unique and is known as tādātmya. Similarly Brahman is the ground on which the world appears through Māyā. When right knowledge dawns and the essential unity of the jīva with the Paramātman is realized, Māyā or Avidyā vanishes.

Shan̐kara emphasizes that from the phenomenal point of view the world is quite real. It is not an illusion. It is a practical reality. He distinguishes the dream state from the waking state. Things seen in a dream are quite true as long as the dream lasts ; they are sublated only when we are awake. Similarly

the world is quite real so long as true knowledge does not dawn. But dreams are private. They are creations of the *jīva* (*jīvasṛṣṭa*). The world is public. It is the creation of *Ishvara* (*Ishvara-sṛṣṭa*). *Jīva* is ignorant of the essential unity and takes only diversity as true and wrongly regards himself as agent and enjoyer. *Avidyā* conceals the unity (*āvaraṇa*) and projects names and forms (*vikṣepa*). *Ishvara* never misses the unity. *Māyā* has only its *vikṣepa* aspect over him. The Highest Brahman (*Para-Brahma*) is both the locus (*āśraya*) and the object (*viṣaya*) of *Māyā*. When the *jīva* realized through knowledge and knowledge alone, karma being subsidiary, this essential unity, liberation is attained here and now (*jīvan-mukti*) and final release (*videha-mukti*) is obtained after the death of the body.

This is a short summary of *Shāṅkarāchārya's* philosophy. He too is considerably influenced by Buddhism. He preserves the best that was in *Mahāyāna* in his own philosophy. He uses many words, especially in his *Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyas*, which were commonly used in *Mahāyāna* literature. But outwardly he is an enemy of Buddhism. *Gauḍapāda* had love and respect for *Mahāyāna*. *Shāṅkara* has nothing but strong and even bitter words for it. It is very important and interesting too to note that *Shāṅkara* does not at all criticize the two most important schools of *Mahāyāna*, the *Shūnyavāda* and the *Vijñānavāda*. What he criticizes under the name of *Vijñānavāda* is in fact *Svatantra-Vijñānavāda*. He summarily dismisses *Shūnyavāda* as a self-condemned nihilism which is below criticism. *Shāṅkara* observes that there are three important schools of Buddhism—the *Sarvāstivāda*, the *Vijñānavāda* and the *Shūnyavāda*. The *Sarvāstivāda* school of *Hīnayāna* which includes both the *Vaibhāṣika* and the *Sautrāntika* schools was bitterly criticized by the *Mahāyāniṣṭs* themselves. *Shāṅkara's* criticism against it is not new. It must be admitted that *Shāṅkara's* exposition of Buddhism is correct and faithful and his criticism of



it is perfectly justified. He avoided Shūnyavāda by taking the word Shūnya in its popular sense and easily dismissing Shūnyavāda as nihilism. And he did not at all touch real Vijñānavāda. By Vijñānavādins he means Svatantra-Vijñānavādins who were his immediate predecessors. It was easy for him to criticize their momentary consciousness. No reference do we find to Asaṅga or Vasubandhu or to their doctrine with the solitary exception, however, of the Ālaya-Vijñāna. On the other hand, we find verses quoted from Dīnāga and Dharmakīrti and their views correctly exposed and criticized. And we also find references to and criticisms of the views of Shāntarakṣita as well as replies to the objections raised by Shāntarakṣita. In regard to those points, however, which Svatantra-Vijñānavāda shares in common with Vijñānavāda, Śaṅkara's criticism applies indirectly to Vijñānavāda also. But here it loses much of its force because Vijñānavāda regards Consciousness as permanent. Śaṅkara, however, represents a definite advance on Vasubandhu as well as on Gauḍapāda who agrees with Vasubandhu.

Let us first deal with Śaṅkara's criticism of the various systems of philosophy before we take up his exposition of his own philosophy.

*Criticism of the Prakṛti-Parināma-Vāda of Sāṅkhya :—*

We have given the arguments advanced by Sāṅkhya in favour of its Prakṛti.<sup>1</sup> Śaṅkara agrees with Sāṅkhya in maintaining that the design, harmony or order in the universe must presuppose a single cause which is eternal and unlimited. But he criticizes Sāṅkhya when it says that such a cause is the unintelligent Prakṛti. According to Śaṅkara the Intelligent Brahman only can be such a cause. How can immanent teleology in nature be explained by unintelligent Prakṛti? We do proceed from the finite to the infinite, from the limited to the unlimited, from the *peros* to the *aperos*,

from the effect to the cause, from plurality to unity. But only the Conscious Brahman associated with its Māyā Shakti can be the creator, preserver and destroyer of this world. Unintelligent Prakṛti is too poor and too powerless to be its cause.<sup>1</sup> We see that stones, bricks and mortar cannot fashion themselves into a well-designed building without the help of intelligent workmen. How can, then, the unintelligent Pradhāna account for the beauty, symmetry, order and harmony of this great universe—internal and external? Again, how can Pradhāna explain the original impetus, the first push, the *elan* which is supposed to disturb the equilibrium of the three guṇas? Mere clay, without a potter, cannot fashion itself into a pot. Chariots cannot move without horses etc. Why should Sāṅkhya hesitatingly admit that the initial activity comes from the mere presence of the Puruṣa (Puruṣa-sannidhi-mātra)? Why should it not frankly admit that it comes from the Conscious Brahman?<sup>2</sup> Again, the argument of Sāṅkhya that just as unintelligent milk flows for the nourishment of the calf, similarly unintelligent Prakṛti works for the emancipation of the Puruṣa, is untenable because milk flows as there is a living cow and a living calf and there is also the motherly love in the cow for the calf. Again, because Prakṛti is regarded as an absolutely independent entity in itself it cannot be related in any way to the indifferent Puruṣa who can neither energise nor restrain it. Then, Prakṛti should sometimes evolve and sometimes should not evolve. Nor can the modification of Prakṛti be compared to that of grass which turns into milk. Grass becomes milk only when it is eaten by a milch cow, not when it lies uneaten or is eaten by a bull.

Again, even if we grant activity to Pradhāna, it cannot explain the teleology which Sāṅkhya takes to be immanent in nature. Unconscious Pradhāna can

<sup>1</sup> Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 1 : Also Chhāndogya Bhāṣya : VI, 2, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 2-2.



have no purpose ; indifferent neutral Puruṣa too can have no purpose. If Sāṅkhya tries to solve the difficulty by pointing out that Prakṛti and Puruṣa combine like the blind and the lame and then Puruṣa, like the magnet moving the iron, may move Prakṛti to accomplish his goal, it is mistaken, for the blind and the lame persons are both intelligent and active beings, while Prakṛti is unconscious and Puruṣa is indifferent. The simile of the magnet and the iron is also wrong. If the mere presence of the Puruṣa is sufficient to move the Pradhāna, then Puruṣa being always co-present, there should be perpetual movement. Thus creation should have no beginning and no end. The liberation of Puruṣa will also become impossible. Again, Prakṛti and Puruṣa can never be related. Prakṛti is unconscious ; Puruṣa is indifferent ; and there is no third principle, no *tertium quid*, to relate them. The chasm which Sāṅkhya has created by postulating two independent and eternal entities, one the subject and other the object, can never be bridged by it. It must therefore recognize a higher conscious principle which transcends and yet gives meaning to and preserves at a lower level, the subject-object duality.

Moreover, by regarding Pradhāna as a mere agent and Puruṣa as a mere enjoyer, Sāṅkhya opens itself to the charge of vicarious suffering which throws all moral responsibility over-board. Why should the Puruṣa suffer for the actions of Pradhāna ? And how can it be possible that Prakṛti knows only to do and not to enjoy ?<sup>1</sup>

Brahman alone, therefore, is the cause and it is universally declared to be so by all the Vedānta texts. The words like mahat, avyakta etc. used in certain Upaniṣads, e.g. in the Kāṭha, do not denote the mahat and avyakta of Sāṅkhya. They simply mean the potentiality of names and forms in their cause Brahman.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 2, 3-7 : Also Prashna-Bhāṣya : VI, 3.

They are not independent of it.<sup>1</sup> Sāṅkhya and Yoga are generally accepted by the wise as conducive to the highest good. But these systems advocate dualism and cannot be supported by the Shruti. The Shruti uses these words only in the sense of knowledge and meditation respectively. Those doctrines of these systems which do not clash with Advaita are accepted by us also.<sup>2</sup> Śaṅkara calls Sāṅkhya as the 'principal opponent' (pradhāna-malla) of the Vedānta and says that its refutation implies the refutation of paramāṇu-kāraṇa-vāda etc.<sup>3</sup>

Sāṅkhya, therefore, should let its Prakṛti glide into Māyā, its Prakṛti-pariṇāmavāda into Brahma-vivarta-vāda, its satkāryavāda into satkāraṇa-vāda, its Puruṣa into jīva, its negative kaivalya into positively blissful mokṣa, and should, instead of maintaining the plurality of Puruṣas representing "a vast array of sad personalities" and creating an unbridgable chasm between the subject and the object, recognize the non-dual Brahman transcending the subject-object duality.

*Criticism of Asat-Kāryavāda* :—Śaṅkara believes in sat-kāryavāda but his interpretation of it is different from that of Sāṅkhya. By it he really means satkāraṇavāda. His view is known as vivartavāda. The effect, no doubt, must pre-exist in the cause. But ultimately the effect is not something different from the cause. The cause alone is real; the effect is only its appearance.

Śaṅkara agrees with the Shūnyavādins and the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins in maintaining, against Sāṅkhya, that if the effect were real and if it really pre-existed in the cause, then it is already an accomplished fact and its production will be a vain repetition. He also agrees with them, against Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, that if the

<sup>1</sup> Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : I, 1, 5-10; I, 4, 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : I, 4, 28.



effect were a non-entity, it would be like a hare's horn and its production would be impossible. We have seen that for the Svatantra-Vijñānavādin, asatkāryavāda is a misnomer for he does not advocate the production of a non-entity. Reality itself, to him, is efficient causation.<sup>1</sup> Śhaṅkara, however, agrees with the Shūnya-vādin, against Svatantra-Vijñānavādin, in maintaining that causation in a real sense is an impossibility. Production cannot be called 'the own essence' of a thing for ultimately there can be neither production nor destruction nor any momentary entity.

The effect, says Śhaṅkara, can never exist independently and outside of the cause either before or after its manifestation. Therefore it cannot be said that the effect does not pre-exist in the cause. The effect is only an appearance of the cause. Though the effect and the cause are non-different, yet it is the effect which exists in and depends on the cause and not *vice versa*.

We see that milk produces curd, clay produces pots and gold produces ornaments. Curd cannot be produced from clay nor can pots be produced from milk. But according to asatkāryavāda this should be possible. If it is rejoined that the cause has a certain peculiarity (atishaya) according to which only certain effects can be produced from certain causes, we reply that if this peculiarity means 'the antecedent condition of the effect', asatkāryavāda is abandoned; and if it means 'the power of the cause to produce a particular determined effect', then it must be admitted that this power is neither different from the cause nor non-existent because if it were either, production would be impossible.

Again, the relation between the cause and the effect, like that between substance and qualities, must be that of identity (tādātmya). It cannot be of the nature of inherence (samavāya) because inherence will

require another relation to relate it to cause and effect and this relation another relation and so on *ad infinitum*; or else inherence itself will be impossible for without being related to the two terms it cannot hang in the air.

Again, according to asatkāryavāda, the effect and the cause can have no connection because connection is possible only between two existent entities and not between an existent and a non-existent entity or between two non-existent entities. Nobody says that the son of a barren woman was a king. He is a non-entity and never was or is or will be a king.

Again, the theory that when the effect is produced the cause is destroyed is absolutely wrong. The cause can never be destroyed. When milk changes into curd, it is not destroyed. Nor is the seed destroyed when it becomes the sprout. If the cause in the process of change is destroyed, recognition will become impossible.

Hence it is impossible to produce an effect which is different from its cause and which does not pre-exist in it even within hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of the Paramāṇu-Kāraṇavāda of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*:—This school maintains that the four substances (earth, water, fire and air) in their amūrta form as causes are eternal and atomic. Ākasha, though itself not atomic, binds the atoms together. The atoms of Democritus are only quantitatively different, are in motion and make up souls also. But the Vaiśeṣika atoms are both quantitatively and qualitatively different, are by nature at rest and are distinct from souls. God assisted by the adṛṣṭa of the jīvas generates motion in the atoms. This motion (parispanda) joins two atoms together which make a dyad (dvyaṇuka). Three

<sup>1</sup> Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, i, 7, 9, 18; Gītā-Bhāṣya : XVIII, 48; Chhāndogya-Bhāṣya : VI, 2, 1-2; Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : I, 2, 1.



such dyads make a triad (tryaṇuka). Four triads form a quartrad (chaturaṇuka) and so on till the gross objects of the world are produced. An atom is infinitesimal and spherical (parimaṇḍala); a dyad is minute (aṇu) and short (hrasva); and a triad and others are great (mahat) and long (dīrgha). The things produced are not mere aggregates, but wholes composed of parts, the parts and the whole being related by inherence (samāvāya). The Vaiśeṣika says that the cause must transmit its qualities to the effect, e.g., white threads make white cloth, and black threads make black cloth. Therefore conscious Brahman cannot be the cause of the unconscious world. Atoms are its cause.

Shāṅkara in refuting this theory points out that it is not necessary for the cause to transmit all its qualities to the effect. Even on the Vaiśeṣika hypothesis an atom which is spherical produces a dyad which is not spherical, but minute and short; and a dyad produces a triad which is neither minute nor short, but great and long. If this is so, why should not the conscious Brahman produce an unconscious world?

Are the atoms essentially active or inactive or both or neither? If active, then creation would become permanent; if inactive, then there would be no creation; if both, the conception would be self-contradictory; and if neither, then their activity must come from outside and this outside agency must be either seen or unseen; if seen, then it should not exist before creation; and if unseen, then it being always present near the atoms, creation would become permanent and if the proximity of the unseen to the atoms is denied, then creation would be impossible. In all cases therefore there can be no creation from atoms.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of the Categories of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika:—*  
This school assumes six categories (padārtha) which,

<sup>1</sup> Shāriraka-Bhāṣya: II, ii, 11 and 14.

unlike the Aristotelian categories which are mere logical predicates, are metaphysical objects. These categories, says Śhaṅkara, are regarded as absolutely different from one another, and still it is maintained that qualities, actions etc. depend upon the substance. If so, then substance alone should exist. If in order to avoid this difficulty it is maintained that substance and qualities are inseparably connected (*ayutasiddha*), then this inseparable connection must be either in space or in time or in itself, and none of these alternatives can support the Vaiśeṣika theory. If it is inseparable in space, then the Vaiśeṣika doctrine that 'substances produce another substances and qualities another qualities' will be upset. If it is inseparable in time, then the two horns of a cow would be inseparably connected. If it is inseparable in itself, then no distinction could be made between substance and qualities.<sup>1</sup>

Śhaṅkara, like Nāgārjuna, Dharmakīrti and Shāntarakṣita challenges the distinction of parts and whole. The whole can be neither a mere aggregate of parts nor can it be something apart from parts. The whole cannot abide in all the parts taken together, for then it would not be perceived as it is impossible to perceive all the parts. If it is said that the whole abides in all the parts taken together through the help of other parts, then it would lead to infinite regress as we would always be forced to assume further parts. Again, the whole cannot abide in each separate part because if it abides in one part, it cannot abide in another part, just as Devadatta cannot be present at the same time in two different places. Moreover, if the whole were present in separate parts, then they would become so many 'wholes'. But whereas for Dharmakīrti and Shāntarakṣita, the whole is unreal and the parts alone are real, for Nāgārjuna and Śhaṅkara, both the whole and the parts are relative and therefore ultimately unreal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 2, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, I, 18.



The Vaisheṣika maintains that Ātman is a substance which is unintelligent in itself and becomes intelligent on account of its contact with mind (manas). This, says Shaṅkara, is highly absurd. To say that the unqualified and indeterminate Ātman really comes into contact with something different from itself is to violate the established canon of logic. Again, either the qualities of pleasure, pain etc. will be reduced to the Ātman and then they too will become permanent, or else the Ātman will be reduced to the qualities and will become impermanent. By no stretch of reasoning can it be proved that the Ātman can feel pleasure or pain or that it is made up of parts or that it is changing.<sup>1</sup>

Action or motion (karma) is impossible and with it creation too is impossible because the adrṣṭa can produce no motion in the atoms. It can inhere neither in the souls nor in the atoms. Hence there can be neither creation nor dissolution.<sup>2</sup>

The universal is also ultimately unreal. We perceive no 'universal cow' in the individual cows. It is only the generic qualities that are present in individual cows. If the 'universal cow', as a 'whole', is present in each cow, then even the horns or the tail of a cow should yield milk.<sup>3</sup>

Inherence too is impossible. Inherence (samavāya) is a category while samyoga or conjunction is a quality, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Inherence is regarded as an eternal, imperceptible, inseparable and real relation subsisting between parts and whole, qualities and substance, action and agent, universal and particular etc. A dyad is supposed to be related to its two constituent atoms by this samavāya. Shaṅkara, like Chandra-

<sup>1</sup> Kena-Pada-Bhāṣya :II, 4; Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya III, 5; Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya I, 4, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Shārīraka-Bhāṣya II, 2, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibīd : II, 1, 18.

kīrti, Dharmakīrti and Shāntarakṣita and like Zeno and Bradley, points out that inherence must lead to infinite regress. Inherence, being different from the two things which it relates, stands in need of another inherence to relate it with them. This second inherence again requires another inherence and so on *ad infinitum*. If it is maintained that samavāya does not inhere in the samavāyin by another samavāya, but is identical with it, then even samyoga should be regarded as identical with the things it conjoins; and as both equally require another relation to relate them to the two terms, no talk of calling samavāya a category and samyoga a quality can remove the difficulty. Śaṅkara's point is that a relation, whatever may be its nature and howsoever intimate it may be regarded, can never be identical with the terms which it relates. If  $t_1$  and  $t_2$  are two terms which are to be related by  $r$ , the relation, then the following difficulties are bound to occur:—

- (1) If  $r$  inheres in  $t_1$ , it cannot relate it with  $t_2$ ;
- (2) If  $r$  inheres in  $t_2$ , it cannot relate it with  $t_1$ ;
- (3) The same  $r$  cannot inhere in both  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ ;
- (4) If  $r$  is absolutely different from  $t_1$  and  $t_2$  and falls outside both, then  $r$  itself becomes another term and requires a further relation which can relate it with  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ . Thus infinite regress is sure to creep in.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the distinction between samyoga and samavāya is untenable. One and the same thing may be called by different names according to different considerations. The same Devadatta may be called a Brāhmaṇa, a learned man, a gentleman, a boy, a youth, an old man, a father, a son, a grandson, a brother, a son-in-law etc. etc.

The six categories of the Vaiśeṣika, therefore, are nothing but mere assumption and if we proceed with mere

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II; 2, 13.



assumptions there is nothing to check us if we assume hundreds and thousands of categories instead of six.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of the Doctrine that God is the efficient cause only* :—Some Yogins and some Vaisheṣikas and others hold that God is the efficient cause only for He is the ruler of Primordial Matter and Souls. This position, say Śaṅkara, is untenable. If God is merely a ruler and makes, according to His sweet will, some persons great, some ordinary and others low, then He will be rightly charged of being actuated by partiality, attachment and hatred and hence He will be one like us and no real God.<sup>2</sup> Nor can the difficulty be removed by supposing that the actions of persons and results given by God form a beginningless series for then that series will be like a line of the blind led by the blind.

Moreover, God cannot be the ruler of Matter and Souls without being connected with them and there can be such connection. It cannot be conjunction because God, Souls and Matter are regarded as infinite and without parts. It cannot be inherence because it is impossible to decide as to which is the abode and which the abiding thing. For us the difficulty does not arise at all because we maintain the identity (tādātmya) of the cause and the effect. Again, if Prakṛti ceases for the liberated soul, it must be finite and there would be nothing for God to rule. Moreover, these three infinite principles will limit one another and will collapse into a void. The infinite can be only one. Further, if Matter and Souls are infinite, God cannot rule over them and then He will be neither omniscient nor omnipotent.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 2, 17.

<sup>2</sup> These objections are urged by Shāntarakṣita also. See Supra ; p. 101-103.

<sup>3</sup> Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, ii, 37, 38, 41.

*Criticism of Brahma-Pariṇāma-Vāda* :—Shaṅkara maintains Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda as he recognizes the Brahman is the cause of the world. But his theory is called Brahma-virarta-vāda because it takes the world to be only a phenomenal appearance of Brahman. Shaṅkara is opposed to Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda. For him, the world is neither a real creation by Brahman nor a real modification of Brahman. Brahman associated with its power Māyā is the ground on which the phenomenal world is super-imposed. When true knowledge dawns and the essential unity of the jivātman with the Paramātman is realized, the world is sublated. Modification or change in quite a realistic manner (satattvato'nyathā prathā), like the change of gold into ornaments or of clay into pots or of milk into curd, is called pariṇāma or vikāra. Unreal change or seeming modification (atattvato'nyathā prathā), like the change of water into waves, bubbles, foam etc., is called vivarta. They are not, as Sarvajñātma Muni rightly points out, absolutely opposed; pariṇāmavāda logically leads to vivartavāda which is only a step ahead of it.<sup>1</sup> The world which cannot be called real either in the beginning or in the end, must be unreal in the middle also.<sup>2</sup>

This entire diverse universe of names and forms, of agents and enjoyers, of space, time and causality, says Shaṅkara, proceeds from that omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent cause, the Brahman which alone is the creator, preserver and destroyer of it.<sup>3</sup> Brahman is the material cause as well as the efficient cause. All the sacred texts which declare Brahman as undergoing modification or change (pariṇāma) do not

<sup>1</sup> विवर्तवादस्य हि पूर्वभूमिर्वेदान्तवादे परिणामवादः ।

<sup>2</sup> नैवाग्रं नावरं यस्य तस्य मध्यं कुतो भवेत् ? Nāgārjuna.  
आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानोऽपि तत्तथा । Gauḍapāda  
न यत् पुरस्तादुत यन् न पश्चान् मध्ये च तन्न व्यपदेशमात्रम् ।

Bhāgavata.

<sup>3</sup> Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : I, 1, 2,



at all mean a real modification or change as it is illogical. Their real aim is to teach that the world is only a phenomenal appearance of Brahman which is in fact beyond all plurality and phenomena and which is the same as the Real Self. Thus Īshvara or Saguṇa Brahman associated with Māyā is the cause of this world.<sup>1</sup>

Shāṅkara gives some of the objections raised by Shāntarakṣita and others and refutes them. He says that some people object to the simile given in some Upaniṣads that just as a spider produces, maintains and devours a cob-web, similarly Brahman creates, maintains and destroys this world. They say that a spider, on account of its desire to eat small insects, emits saliva which produces the web. What such desire and what external means can Brahman have?<sup>2</sup> To this we reply that creation is not something ultimately real. It is only an appearance. Moreover, Brahman being Consciousness can need no other external means except its own potency, Māyā. Again, it is objected that Īshvara can not be the creator of this world for then the charges of inequality and cruelty will be levelled against Him. Why should He make some people happy and others miserable? Is He not partial to some and prejudiced against others?<sup>3</sup> We reply that he cannot be so charged. The Shruti and the Smṛti declare that the inequality in the creation is due to the merits and demerits of the creatures. Just as a cloud rains the same water, though different seeds frutify according to their different potentialities, similarly Īshvara is the common cause of creation, though different creatures reap different fruits on account of the difference in their actions. The objection that before creation merits and demerits do not

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 27

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 25 ; Compare Shāntarakṣita's objections.  
Supra : p. 101-103.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 34-35 ; Compare Shāntarakṣita's objections.

exist is invalid, for creation has no beginning. Merits and inequality, therefore like seeds and sprouts are both cause and effect.<sup>1</sup> But it should be remembered that ultimately creation is an impossibility. Śaṅkara agrees with the Shūnyavādins and with Gauḍapāda here. Brahman is the only Reality. It cannot be produced from itself because there can be neither any peculiarity (atishaya) nor any change (vikāra) in the eternal. It cannot be produced from anything other than itself for every other thing except Brahman is non-existent and unreal.<sup>2</sup> Again, why should Brahman really create. It has no desire or ambition to fulfil. If it has, it is not perfect. No desire or ambition of Brahman can be proved either by independent reasoning or by Shrūti. (Āptakāmasya kā sprhā?) Therefore it must be remembered, says Śaṅkara, that whenever we talk of creation, we do not mean real creation; we mean only a phenomenal apprehence of Brahman due to Avidyā and this creation-appearance is real only as long as Avidyā lasts.<sup>3</sup> When Avidyā is removed by right knowledge, God, the Ruler; Soul, the Enjoyer; and World, the Enjoyed—all are merged in the Highest Brahman.<sup>4</sup>

*Criticism of Jainism*:—The Jainas believe in the theory of Relativity called the Sapta-bhaṅgī-naya or the Syādvāda; (1) Relatively, it is; (2) Relatively, it is not; (3) Relatively, it both is and is not; (4) Relatively, it is indescribable; (5) Relatively, it is and is indescribable; (6) Relatively, it is not and is indescribable; (7) Relatively, it both is and is not and is also indescribable. They also say that a thing may be one as well as many, eternal as well as momentary.

Śaṅkara, like Dharmakīrti and Shāntarakṣita, bitterly criticizes this theory. He points out that contradictory attributes like existence and non-existence,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, 3, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : III, 2, 13.



unity and plurality, eternity and momentariness etc. cannot belong to the same thing, just as light and darkness cannot remain at the same place or just as the same thing cannot be hot and cold at the same time. According to this view, the theory of Syādvāda itself may not be correct. Relativity cannot be sustained without the Absolute which is rejected by the Jainas. The theory looks like the words of a lunatic. Again, the judgments cannot be indescribable, for they are clearly set forth. To describe them and to say that they are indescribable is a contradiction in terms.<sup>1</sup>

*Criticism of Buddhism :—*

(a) *Criticism of the Sarvāstivāda School :—*This is the most important School of the Hīnayāna. It is divided into two major schools—the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika. The former attaches itself to Vibhāṣa, a Commentary on an Abhidharma work and may be called presentationism or naïve realism as it maintains like Descartes, the independent existence of mind and matter. The latter attaches itself to the Sūtra and may be called representationism or critical realism as it maintains like Locke, that the existence of external objects is inferred through mental presentations, even as eating of good food is inferred through corpulence or a country is inferred through language. But both these Schools are equally realistic and reduce mind to fleeting ideas (saṁtāna) and matter to fleeting sensations (saṅghāta).

Shāṅkara takes both these schools under the name of 'Sarvāstivāda' and says that its followers hold that external reality is either element (bhūta) or elemental (bhautika) and that internal reality is either mind (chitta) or mental (chaitta). Earth, water, fire and air are elements. Colour etc. and the sense-organs like eye etc. are elemental. The internal world consists

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 2, 33 ; Compare with the arguments of Dharma-kīrti and Shāntarakṣita : Supra, p. 107.

of the five skandhas—of sensation, idea, feeling, conception and forces.

Shaṅkara objects that these two types of aggregates—external as well as internal—can never be formed at all. The unintelligent momentary atoms and the momentary skandhas cannot form any systematic whole. No intelligent principle—enjoyer or ruler—which may unite these aggregates is admitted by the opponents. If it is urged that the momentary vijñāna unites the aggregates, it is untenable, for the vijñāna must come into existence in the first moment and must unite the aggregates in the second moment which would mean that the vijñāna exists at least for two moments and is therefore not momentary. Nor can the aggregates be formed on account of Dependent Causation, for in the Wheel of Causation each preceding link is the immediate efficient cause of the succeeding link only, not of the whole aggregate. The momentary atoms too cannot combine by themselves. When it is impossible even for the permanent Vaiśeṣika atoms to combine, it is more so with the Buddhist atoms which are momentary.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the Buddhists maintain that existence arises from non-existence, that a seed must be destroyed before a sprout can spring up or milk must be destroyed before curd can come into being. Shaṅkara replies that an entity can never arise from a non-entity. Had it been so anything would arise from anything. Nothing can originate from the horns of a hare. And even when Buddhists themselves admit that aggregates arise from atoms and mental states from the skandhas, why should they confuse the world with worse than useless contradictions?<sup>2</sup>

(b) *Criticism of the Theory of Momentariness (kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda)* :- The antecedent link in the causal series,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid ; II, 2, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



says Shaṅkara cannot even be regarded as the efficient cause of the subsequent link because, according to the theory of momentariness, the preceding link ceases to exist when the subsequent link arises. If it is urged that the antecedent moment when fully developed (pariṇiṣpannāvasthah) becomes the cause of the subsequent moment, it is untenable, because the assertion that a fully developed moment has a causal efficiency necessarily presupposes its connection with the second moment and this repudiates the theory of universal momentariness. Again, if it is urged (as is done by the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins) that the mere existence of the preceding moment means its causal efficiency (bhāva evāśya vyāpārah), this too is impossible, because no effect can arise without imbibing the nature of the cause and to admit this is to admit that the cause is permanent as it continues to exist in the effect and thus to throw overboard the doctrine of momentariness.

Again, are production and destruction the nature of a thing (vastunaḥ svarūpameva) or another state of it (avasthāntaram vā) or a different thing (vastvantarameva vā)? All these alternatives are impossible. In the first case, production and destruction would become synonymous with the thing itself. Again if it is said that production is the beginning, thing is the middle, and destruction is the end, then a thing, being connected with three moments, would not be momentary. And if it be maintained that production and destruction are two absolutely different things like a horse and a buffalo, then the thing, being different from production and destruction would become permanent. Again, if production and destruction are regarded as perception and non-perception, then too, perception and non-perception, being the attributes of the perceiving mind and not of the thing, the thing would become permanent. In all cases therefore the theory of momentariness is entirely untenable.

Again, if the opponent says that things arise without a cause, he violates his own statement that things arise depending on causes and conditions. Then anything may arise out of anything. And if the opponent says that the preceding cause lasts only upto the arising of the succeeding effect, this would imply that the cause and the effect are simultaneous.

Again, there can be neither conscious destruction (pratisaṅkhyānirodha, e.g., of a jar by a stick), nor unconscious destruction (apratisaṅkhyānirodha, e.g., the decay of things), because these can relate themselves neither to the series (saṁtāna-gochara) as in all the series the members are causally related in an uninterrupted manner, nor to the members of the series (bhāva-gochara) as a momentary thing cannot be completely annihilated because it is recognized in different states as having a connected existence.

Again, if Ignorance is destroyed by Right Knowledge, then the Buddhistic doctrine that universal destruction is going on without any cause is given up; and if it is destroyed by itself, then the Buddhistic teaching pertaining to the 'Path' to help the destruction of Ignorance becomes futile. Moreover, bondage and liberation are also impossible. If the soul is momentary, whose is the bondage and whose is the liberation? Again, there will be vicarious liability in moral life. He who performs an act will lose its fruit and another will have to reap it.

The fact of memory and recognition gives a death-blow to the theory of momentariness. The past is recognized and remembered in the present and this implies the existence of a permanent synthesizing subject without whom knowledge shall always remain an impossibility. Identity cannot mean similarity. Even similarity requires a permanent subject who knows two things to be similar. When the Buddhist



himself recognises all his successive cognitions, till he breathes his last, as belonging to the same Self, should he not tremble in maintaining shamelessly the the doctrine of momentariness ?<sup>1</sup> Everything may be doubted but the self can never be doubted for the very idea of doubt presupposes the self. Indeed, when philosophers fail to admit a self-evident fact, they may try to uphold their view and refute the view of their opponents, but in doing this, they entangle themselves in mere words and, honestly speaking, they convince neither their opponents nor even themselves.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *Criticism of "Vijñānavāda"* (really of Svatantra-Vijñānavāda) :—By the term "Vijñānavāda", Shaṅkara really means 'Svatantra-Vijñānavāda'. These Buddhists, says Shaṅkara, maintain the existence of momentary ideas only. They say that Buddha taught the reality of the external world to his inferior disciples who cling to this world, while to his superior disciples he gave his real teaching that ultimate reality is the momentary vijñāna only. Shaṅakra, taking his stand mainly on the Ālambanaparīkṣā of Dīnāga, exposes the Buddhist view as follows :—

If external things exist they should be either atoms or aggregates of atoms like posts etc. And both are impossible. Atoms cannot be perceived and their aggregates can be regarded neither as identical with nor as different from the atoms. It is the ideas themselves which appear as different external objects,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : II, 2, 20-25

<sup>2</sup> कथं क्षणभंगवादी वैनाशिको नापत्रपेत ?

Hemachandra has also raised similar objections, e.g.,

कृतप्रणाशाकृतकर्मभोगभवप्रमोक्षस्मृतिभंगदोषान् ।

उपेक्ष्य साक्षात्क्षणभंगमिच्छन्नहो महासाहसिकः परस्ते ॥

यदा हि लोकप्रसिद्धः पदार्थः परीक्षकैर्न परिगृह्यते तदा स्वपक्षसिद्धिः परपक्षदोषो बोध्यमप्युच्यमानं परीक्षकाणामात्मनश्च यथार्थत्वेन न बुद्धिसन्तानमारोहति । Ibid : II, 2, 25

as a post, a wall, a pot, a cloth etc. The fact that the idea is identical with the external object is proved also by the rule that the internal idea and the external object are always experienced simultaneously (*sahopalambhaniyamāt*). There is also no difference between waking and dreaming states. Just as in states like dreams, magical illusions, mirage, sky-castles, etc., etc., it is the ideas themselves which appear as subjects and as objects though there are no external objects, similarly in waking state too the ideas themselves appear as external objects. The plurality of the ideas is due the beginningless impressions (*vāsanā*), and not due to the plurality of the so-called external objects. In the beginningless *samsāra* ideas and impressions succeed each other, like seeds and sprouts, as causes and effects.

Shaṅkara vehemently criticizes this view. According to him it is subjective idealism. And the tragedy is heightened by the fact that ideas are regarded as momentary. Shaṅkara's standpoint here is that of psychological realism. The external world must exist because we perceive it. If things and ideas are presented together it does not mean that they are identical. If objects depend on the mind it does not mean that they are a part of the mind. To be perceived by the mind is not to be a portion of the mind. The arguments of the Buddhist in denying the external world though he is himself experiencing it, are like the words of a person who while he is eating and feeling satisfied, says he is not eating or feeling satisfied. We perceive a black cow and a white cow. Now, the attributes of blackness and whiteness may differ but cowness remains the same. Similarly in 'Cognition of a jar' and 'cognition of a cloth,' jar and cloth being objects differ, while consciousness remains the same. This proves that ideas and objects are distinct.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid : II, 2, 28. तस्मादर्थज्ञानयोर्भेदः ।



If the Buddhist replies that he is not denying the *consciousness* of objects but he is only asserting that he perceives no object apart from consciousness, he is only making a purely arbitrary statement which he cannot prove by any sound argument. No body is conscious of his perception only, but everybody perceives external objects like post, wall etc. Even the Buddhist while explicitly denying the external object implicitly accepts it. Diĥnāga says that "internal consciousness itself appears *as if* it is something external".<sup>1</sup> Now if there is no external world, how can he say that consciousness appears *as if* it is something external? Indeed, no sane person says that Viṣṇumitra appears like the son of a barren woman. There can be no hypothetical without a categorical basis. Possibility always involves actuality.<sup>2</sup> The possibility or impossibility of things can be determined only through means of right knowledge. Means of right knowledge themselves do not depend on pre-conceived possibility or impossibility. That is possible which can be proved by any valid means of cognition like perception etc. And that is impossible which cannot be so proved. Now, the external objects are apprehended by all valid means of cognition. How can their existence be then legitimately denied?<sup>3</sup>

Shāṅkara also quotes a verse from Dharmakīrti to the effect that "non-dual consciousness itself is wrongly viewed *as if* it appears as the subject-object duality".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "यदन्तर्ज्ञेयरूपं तद् बहिर्वदवभासते ।" Ibid.

This is the first-half of the sixth verse of the Ālambana-Parīkṣā of Diĥnāga, quoted by Shāṅkara.

<sup>2</sup> इतरथा हि कस्माद् बहिर्वदिति ब्रूयुः । नहि विष्णुमित्रो बन्ध्यापुत्र-वदवभासत इति कश्चिदाचक्षीत । Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> अविभागोऽपि बुद्ध्यात्मा विपर्यासितदर्शनैः ।

ग्राह्यग्राहकसंविर्त्तिभेदवानिव लक्ष्यते ॥

(Pramāṇavārtika : III, 354) Quoted in Upadesha Sāhasri : XVIII, 142.

Shaṅkara criticizes this view also from the same standpoint from which he criticizes that of Dīnaṅga. He objects to the phrase "*as if external*." He points out that the Buddhists should say that Consciousness appears as the external world, and not that it appears *as if* it is something external.<sup>1</sup> Thus Shaṅkara himself admits that the entire subject-object universe is only an appearance of the Ātman which is Pure Consciousness. His point is simply to reject subjective idealism and to emphasize the phenomenal reality of the external world.

Shaṅkara also emphasizes that the dream state and the waking state cannot be placed on a par. These states are entirely different. Things seen in a dream are sublated in the waking state. Their falsity and illusory character are realised when the dreamer awakes. But the things like posts, walls etc. seen in the waking state are not so contradicted or sublated. Dreams are private ; waking life is public. Dreams are remembered ; things in waking life are directly perceived. They cannot be treated on the same level on the pretext that both are equally experienced through consciousness. Even the Buddhist himself realises the acute difference between the two and what is directly experienced cannot be refuted by mere intellectual jugglery.<sup>2</sup>

Again, the Buddhistic assertion that the plurality of ideas is due to the plurality of impressions and not due to the plurality of external objects is also wrong, because if the external objects do not exist then impressions themselves cannot arise. And even if these impressions are held to be beginningless, this position is like a series of the blind, leading to the fallacy of infinite regress and at once negating

<sup>1</sup> तस्माद् यथानुभवं तत्त्वमभ्युपगच्छद्भिर्बहिरेवावभासत इति युक्तमभ्युपगन्तुं न तु बहिर्वदवभासत इति । Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 28.

<sup>2</sup> न शक्यते वक्तुं मिथ्या जागरितोपलब्धिरुपलब्धित्वात् स्वप्नोपलब्धिवदित्युभयोरन्तरं स्वयमनुभवता । Ibid. II, 2, 29.



all practices of this world. Moreover, impressions being mental modifications require a substratum to inhere and in the Buddhistic view there is no such substratum.<sup>1</sup> Ālayavijñāna too which is held to be momentary cannot be, like individual cognitions (pravṛttivijñānas), the substratum of impressions.<sup>2</sup>

Shāṅkara says that his criticism of the theory of momentariness equally applies to this school also.<sup>3</sup> Momentary ideas cannot ideate themselves. There must be a permanent self to synthesize the fleeting ideas and give them a unity and a meaning. The preceding and the succeeding ideas become extinct as soon as they become objects of consciousness. They can neither apprehend nor be apprehended. Hence the various Buddhistic theories like the theory that fleeting ideas succeed one another, the theory of momentariness, the theory of the Unique Particular and the General, the theory that the preceding idea leaves an impression which causes the succeeding idea to arise, the theory of Ignorance, the theory of Existence and Non-Existence of things, the theory of Bondage and Liberation etc. all crumble down.<sup>4</sup>

If the Buddhist replies that the idea is self-conscious and is apprehended by itself like a luminous lamp, he is wrong, for to say that the momentary idea illuminates itself is as absurd as to say that fire burns itself. If he again urges that to say that an idea is apprehended by something else is to involve oneself in infinite regress as this something else would require another thing to apprehend it, and therefore the only way to avoid this infinite regress is to maintain that an idea is self-luminous like a lamp, both these arguments put forth by him are fallacious. In fact it is only the permanent self, which apprehends

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, II, 2, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, II, 2, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, II, 2, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, II, 2, 28.

the manifold ideas and synthesizes them into a unity, which may be regarded self-luminous like a lamp needing nothing else for its illumination. But an idea cannot be so regarded. An idea is apprehended by the self. An idea, therefore, is just like an object in relation to the knowing self which is the subject. As the self which apprehends the ideas requires nothing else for its own apprehension, the charge of infinite regress does not arise at all. And so the second objection also becomes ineffective. The Self alone is the knowing subject; an idea is only a known object. The witnessing self is a self-evident fact. Its existence is self-proved and can never be denied.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the view that a momentary idea, like a lamp, manifests itself without being illuminated by the self, means that knowledge is possible without a knowing subject. It is as absurd as to maintain that a thousand lamps manifest themselves inside a deep impenetrable rock.<sup>2</sup> If the Buddhist says that by idea he means consciousness and that we Vedāntins too who accept the ultimate reality of consciousness, accept his view, he is utterly mistaken, because for us an idea is only like an object requiring for its manifestation the self-luminous Self which is the knower. Again, if the Buddhist rejoins that our witnessing Self which is self-luminous and self-proved is only his idea in disguise, he is wrong, because whereas his ideas are momentary and manifold and are no better than a scattered chaos, originating and dying away, our Self, on the other hand, is non-dual and permanent and is the ultimate knowing subject which synthesizes these scattered ideas into a unity and gives them a meaning.<sup>3</sup> Therefore we see that the difficulty in Buddhism is not removed even if we grant self-cons-

१ स्वयंसिद्धस्य च साक्षिणोऽप्रत्याख्येयत्वात् । Ibid.

२ शिलाघनमध्यस्थप्रदीपसहस्रप्रथनवत् । Ibid.

३ साक्षिणोऽवगन्तुः स्वयंसिद्धतामुपक्षिपता स्वयं प्रथते विज्ञानमित्येष एव मम पक्षस्त्वया वाचोयुक्त्यन्तरणाश्रित इति चेत् न, विज्ञानस्योत्पत्ति-प्रध्वंसानेकत्वादिविशेषवत्त्वाभ्युपगमात् । Ibid.



ciouness to the vijñānas, for the vijñānas being momentary and manifold will only add to confusion. It is only the Self, the permanent knower and the eternal seer whose sight is never destroyed.<sup>1</sup> Even hundreds of Buddhists cannot disprove the self-proved self nor can they replace it by their momentary idea, just as a dead person cannot be brought back to life again.<sup>2</sup>

These Buddhists believe, says Shaṅkara, that knowledge itself (dhīreva), being self-luminous consciousness (chitsvarūpāvabhāsakatvena), appears in its own form as subject (svākārā) as well as in the form of external objects (viśayākārā cha), that it is the idea (vijñāna) itself which manifests itself as subject and as object (grāhyagrāhakākārā), and that this transparent (svachchhībhūtam) and momentary (kṣaṇikam) idea (vijñānam)) ultimately transcends the subject-object duality (grāhyagrāhaka-vinirmuktam).<sup>3</sup>

All these assumptions, says Shaṅkara, are obstacles to the Vedic path leading to the Highest Good.<sup>4</sup> The illumination of a lamp is not its own; it comes from the self. In this respect there is no difference between a pot and a lamp for both are equally objects. Thus the momentary vijñāna which is only an object to the self which knows it, cannot manifest itself as the subject-object duality. The momentary vijñānas must be known by the self (vijñānasyāpi chaitanyagrāhyatvāt). This self which knows the manifold vijñānas and gives them unity and meaning, is different from them and is the only light or the self-luminous knower.<sup>5</sup> If the ideas alone were real, then they

<sup>1</sup> Brhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : IV, 3, 30 ; IV, 4, 25 ; Muṇḍaka-Bhāṣya I, 1, 6 , Kena-Pada-Bhāṣya : II, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Prashna-Bhāṣya VI, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Brhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : IV, 3, 7.

<sup>4</sup> सर्वा एताः कल्पनाः श्रेयोमार्गस्य प्रतिपक्षभूता वैदिकस्य । Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> विज्ञानस्य ग्रहीता स आत्मा ज्योतिरन्तरं विज्ञानात् ।

would be synonymous with pots, cloths etc. for they are all objects to the knowing-self.<sup>1</sup> This would lead to the abolition of the distinction between subject and object, means and end, actions and results and would further lead to the annihilation of all phenomenal practices. (sarva-samvyavahāralopa-prasaṅgaḥ). Bondage and Liberation would be impossible. The sacred texts of the Buddhists would be useless (upadesha-shāstrānarthakya-prasaṅgaḥ) and their authors would have to be regarded as ignorant (tatkarturajñānaprasaṅgaḥ). There would be also vicarious liability (akṛtābhyāgama) and destruction of deeds (kṛtavipraṇāsha). If the self-conscious vijñāna is the only reality and there is no self, then the qualities of momentariness, soullessness etc. would not be imposed on it. Nor can these qualities be regarded as a part of the vijñāna for it is impossible that qualities like suffering etc. which are enjoyed should be a part of the vijñāna which is the enjoyer. Nor can these qualities be natural to vijñāna for if they were so, it would be impossible to remove suffering etc. And then liberation would be impossible. Nor can the annihilation of the vijñāna be regarded as the cessation of suffering etc. for surely if a person who is pierced by a deadly thorn dies, he cannot be said to have been cured of the pain produced by that thorn. Death, certainly, is not the remedy of a disease.<sup>2</sup>

Now, it will be easy to see that the view which Śhaṅkara exposes and criticizes under the name of 'Vijñānavāda' is in fact Svatantra-Vijñānavāda. We do not find any reference to the doctrines of Laṅkāvatāra, Aśaṅga and Vasubandhu. But we find that Śhaṅkara has quoted half-a-verse from Dīpāṅga, one verse from Dharmakīrti and has often referred to the views of Śāntarakṣita without however mentioning the names

<sup>1</sup> विज्ञानं घटः पट इत्येवमादीनां.....पर्यायशब्दत्वं प्राप्नोति । Ibid

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



of any. We also see that his exposition of 'Vijñānavāda' is in fact a correct and a clear exposition of Svatantra-Vijñānavāda. We should also remember that Svatantra-Vijñānavādin were his immediate predecessors. All these facts support our view that the so-called criticism of 'Vijñānavāda' by Shaṅkara is really the criticism of the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda School; the real Vijñāna-vāda of Aśaṅga and Vasubandhu is not refuted by it.

(d) *Advance on Vijñānavāda and on Gauḍapāda* :—It may be pointed out however that in regard to those views which Vijñānavāda shares in common with Svatantra-Vijñānavāda, Shaṅkara's criticism applies to Vijñānavāda also. But it is very important to note that here Shaṅkara's criticism loses much of its force. The Ālambana-Parīkṣa of Dinnāga is not a very original work. Almost all its ideas are based on Vasubandhu's works. We know that Vasubandhu in his Viṃśatikā and in his Bhāṣya on it criticized the atoms of the Vaisheṣikas and of the Vaibhāṣikas. We also know that he declared external objects to be inside consciousness. We also know that he placed dream state and waking state almost on equal footing.<sup>1</sup> We also know that Gauḍapāda too agreed completely with Vasubandhu in many respects.<sup>2</sup> Shaṅkara's criticism, therefore, applies in some respects to Vasubandhu and Gauḍapāda. But we say that this criticism loses much of its force because, firstly, Vasubandhu and Gauḍapāda do not deny the *objectivity* of the external world, as the *objects* appear as *objects* to the knowing subject, and secondly, because they hold pure Consciousness which is the same as the self-luminous Self to be the *permanent* background of all phenomena. Their view is not subjective idealism. It is absolutism.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Supra : pp. 66-68.

<sup>2</sup> See Supra : pp. 126-129.

<sup>3</sup> See Supra : pp. 74 and 129.

When it is maintained that pure and permanent Consciousness, which is self-luminous and which transcends the subject-object duality, is the only reality and that the world is only its appearance, the criticism of Śhaṅkara falls off the mark because he himself believes in this view.

The difference between Vasubandhu and Gauḍapāda on the one hand, and Śhaṅkara on the other, is not the difference of kind but only of degree. The difference is only of emphasis. We know that Vasubandhu and Gauḍapāda distinguish between the illusory (*parikalpita*) and the relative (*paratantra*) aspects. They place these two states on a par only in order to emphasize *the ultimate unreality* of the world. Śhaṅkara, on the other hand, is keen—and herein his greatness lies—to emphasize *the phenomenal reality* of the world. Secondly, he wants to prove the unreality of the external world not by saying that it does not fall outside consciousness but by saying that it is essentially false (*mithyā*) because it can be described neither as existent nor as non-existent (*sadasadanirva-chanīya*). We have seen that the seed of this doctrine was present in Gauḍapāda and in Shūnyavāda. Thirdly, in Śhaṅkara Vasubandhu's *Vijñaptimātra* gives place to Brahman or Ātman, Ālayavijñāna to Īshvara, Manovijñāna to Jīva, Viśayavijñapti to Jagat, and Parīṇāma to Vivarta. Śhaṅkara in fact develops the ideas found in Shūnyavāda, Vijñānavāda and Gauḍapāda almost to perfection and spotless purity.

Śhaṅkara's criticism, therefore, applies and is intended by him to apply with full force to Svatantra-Vijñānavāda only which degrades Consciousness merely to momentary and manifold ideas.

(e) *Criticism of Shūnyavāda* :—Śhaṅkara takes the word 'Shūnya' in the sense of mere negation and says that Shūnyavāda which is pure nihilism is contradicted by all valid means of cognition. It stands self-



condemned. The Shūnyavādin, says Shaṅkara, cannot legitimately negate all phenomenal practices unless he finds some higher truth (anyattattva). Shaṅkara therefore summarily dismisses Shūnyavāda taking it to be below criticism.<sup>1</sup> But really Shūnyavāda does admit such Tattva<sup>2</sup>.

(f) *General Criticism of Buddhism* :—The more we examine the Buddhistic system, says Shaṅkara, the more it gives way like a well dug in sand. It has no solid foundation. There is no truth in it. It can serve no useful purpose. Buddha by teaching three mutually contradictory systems of Bāhyārthavāda, Vijñānavāda and Shūnyavāda, has proved it beyond doubt that either he was fond of making contradictory statements or else his hatred of people made him teach three contradictory doctrines so that people may be utterly confused and deluded by accepting them. Therefore all persons who desire the Good should at once reject Buddhism.<sup>3</sup>

We thus see that Shaṅkara's attitude towards Buddhism is that of hatred and animosity. He uses harsh words for Buddha and for Buddhists. The spirit of Gauḍapāda is gone. As for his criticism of Buddhism we may make the following remarks : Shaṅkara finds it easy to dismiss Shūnyavāda taking the word Shūnya in its popular sense of pure negation or void. When he remarks that Shūnyavāda cannot dismiss the world as pure negation nor even as relative existence unless it finds some higher truth (tattva), he

1 शून्यवादिपक्षस्तु सर्वप्रमाणविप्रतिषिद्ध इति तन्निराकरणाय नादरः क्रियते, न ह्ययं सर्वप्रमाणप्रसिद्धो लोकव्यवहारोजन्यतु तत्त्वमनधिगम्य शक्यतेऽपह्नोतुम् ।

Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 31 Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : IV, 3, 7.

2 Mādhyamika-Kārikās : XVIII, 9.

3 सर्वथाप्यनादरणीयोज्यं सुगतसमयः श्रेयस्कामैः ।

Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 32.

takes it for granted that it has no such higher truth. But our entire treatment of Shūnyavāda bears ample witness to the fact that Shūnyavāda declares the world to be relative and therefore ultimately unreal only because it emphatically believes in the reality of the higher truth or Tattva which it calls Paramārtha. Shaṅkara, therefore, only avoids Shūnyavāda. We have also noticed that Shaṅkara does not refute real Vijñānavāda. So far as Bāhyārthavāda or Sarvāstivāda is concerned we know that this school or Hīnayāna was bitterly criticized by the Mahāyānist themselves and Shaṅkara's criticism against it cannot be regarded as altogether new or original, although it is perfectly valid. The full force of Shaṅkara's criticism is therefore directed against the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda school, especially against its theory of momentariness. The criticism is fully justified.

We have noticed Shaṅkara's dialectical criticism of the various other schools of philosophy where we have also explained Shaṅkara's own standpoint. We now turn to his exposition of his own philosophy.

There is a famous saying that the entire system of Advaita Vedānta may be summarized in half a verse which runs as follows: Brahman is the only Reality; the world is ultimately false; and the individual soul is non-different from Brahman.<sup>1</sup> Brahman and Ātman or the Supreme Self are synonymous terms. The world is a creation of Māyā. The individual selves on account of their inherent Avidyā know themselves as different from Brahman and mistake Brahman as this world of plurality even as we mistake a rope as a snake. Avidyā vanishes at the dawn of knowledge—the supra-relational direct and intuitive knowledge of the non-dual self which means liberation.

<sup>1</sup> ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन् मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।



*Māyā and Brahman* : The words *Māyā*, *Avidyā*, *Ajñāna*, *Adhyāsa*, *Adhyāropa*, *Anirvachanīya*, *Vivarta*, *Bhrānti*, *Bhrama*, *Nāma-rūpa*, *Avyakta*, *Akṣara*, *Bija-shakti*, *Mūla-prakṛti* etc. are recklessly used in Vedānta as very nearly synonymous. Of these *Māyā*, *Avidyā*, *Adhyāsa* and *Vivarta* are very often used as interchangeable terms. There are two schools among later Advaitins divided on the question whether *Māyā* and *Avidyā* are indential or different. The general trend of the Advaitins including Śhaṅkara himself has been to treat these two terms as synonymous and to distinguish between the two aspects of *Māyā* or *Avidyā* which are called *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa*, the former being the negative aspect of concealment and the latter the positive aspect of projection. The advocates of the other school who treat *Māyā* and *Avidyā* as different say that *Māyā* is something *positive*, though absolutely dependent on and inseparable from Brahman, which provides a medium for the reflection of Brahman and for the projection of this world, being an essentially indistinguishable power (*shakti*) of Brahman, while *Avidyā* is entirely *negative* in character, being pure ignorance or absence of knowledge of Reality. Secondly, *Māyā*, the cosmic power of projection, conditions *Īshvara* who is not affected by *Avidyā*; while *Avidyā*, the individual ignorance conditions the *Jīva*. Brahman reflected in *Māyā* is the *Īshvara* and Brahman reflected in *Avidyā* is the *Jīva*.<sup>1</sup> Hence, though the individual ignorance is dispelled by knowledge, *Māyā*, being the inherent nature of Brahman, cannot be so dispelled, Thirdly, *Māyā* is made preponderatingly of *sattva*, while *Avidyā* is made of all the three—*sattva*, *rājas* and *tamas*. But really speaking the two schools are not opposed. Whether *Māyā* is called the cosmic and positive power of projection and *Avidyā* the individual and negative ignorance, or *Māyā* and *Avidyā* are treated as synonymous and as having two aspects

<sup>1</sup> कार्योपाधिरयं जीवः कारणोपाधिरीश्वरः ।

of concealment and projection, the fundamental position remains the same. Further, both the schools agree that Īshvara is ever free from the negative aspect of Ignorance and that in Him sattva preponderates. Hence, whether concealment is called Avidyā or Tūlāvidyā and projection Māyā or Mūlāvidyā, the difference is only in words.

Shaṅkarāchārya brings out the following characteristics of Māyā or Avidyā :

- (1) Like the Prakṛti of Sāṅkhya, it is something *material and unconscious* (jaḍā) as opposed to Brahman (Puruṣa in the case of Sāṅkhya) which is Pure Consciousness, though unlike Prakṛti, it is neither real nor independent.
- (2) It is the inherent *Power or Potency* (shakti) of Brahman. It is coeval with Him. It is absolutely dependent on and inseparable from Brahman. It is non-different (ananyā) from Him. The relation of Māyā and Brahman is unique and is called tādātmya ; it is neither identity nor difference nor both. Māyā is energised and acts as a medium of the projection of this world of plurality on the non-dual ground of Brahman.
- (3) It is *beginningless* (anādi).
- (4) It is something *positive* (bhāvarūpā), though not real. It is called positive in order to emphasize the fact that it is not merely negative. It has two aspects. In its negative aspect it conceals (āvaraṇa) Reality and acts as a screen to hide it. In its positive aspect it projects (vikṣepa) the world of plurality on the Brahman-Ground. It is non-apprehension as well as mis-apprehension.
- (5) It is *indescribable and undefinable* for it is *neither real nor unreal nor both* (sadasadanirvachanīyā). It is not real, for it has no existence apart



from Brahman ; it is not unreal, for it projects the world of appearance. It is not real, for it vanishes at the dawn of knowledge ; it is not unreal, for it is true as long as it lasts. It is not real to constitute a limit to Brahman and yet it is real enough to give rise to the world of appearance. And it is not both real and unreal, for this conception is self-contradictory.

- (6) It has a *phenomenal and relative* character (vyāva-hārika sattā). It is an *appearance* only (vivarta).
- (7) It is of the nature of *superimposition* (adhyāsa). It is an error (bhrānti) like that of a 'rope-snake' or a 'shell-silver'. It is the superimposition upon one thing of the character of another thing. It is wrong cognition or misapprehension.
- (8) It is *removable by Right Knowledge* (Vijñāna-nirasyā). When Vidyā dawns Avidyā vanishes. When the rope is known, the 'rope-snake' vanishes.
- (9) Its locus (āshraya) as well as object (viṣaya) is Brahman and yet Brahman is really untouched by it, even as a magician is unaffected by his magic or the colourless ākāsha is untouched by the dark colour attributed to it.

It is self-evident, says Shaṅkara, that the subject and the object are absolutely opposed to each other like light and darkness. The subject is Pure Consciousness ; the object is Unconsciousness. The one is the ultimate 'I' ; the other is the 'non-I'. Neither these two nor their attributes can therefore, be identified. Yet it is the natural and common practice of people that they wrongly superimpose the object and its attributes upon the subject and *vice versa* the subject and its attributes upon the object. This co-mingling of the subject and the object, this mixing

up of truth and error, this coupling of the real and the unreal (*satyāṇṛte mithunīkṛtya*) is called superimposition (*adhyāsa*) or error, (*bhrama*) or illusion (*māyā*) or ignorance (*avidyā*). All definitions of error agree in maintaining that error is the superimposition of one thing on another, e.g., the superimposition of silver on shell or the illusion of the Moons on a single Moon. This super-imposition the learned call 'ignorance', and the realization of the true nature of reality by discarding error, they call 'knowledge'. This Ignorance is the presupposition of all practices of this phenomenal world. Superimposition, therefore, is the notion of a thing in something else (*atasmin tadbuddih*). This unreal beginningless cycle of superimposition goes on leading to the false notions of the agent and the enjoyer and to all phenomenal practices. The study of the Vedānta texts is undertaken in order to free oneself from this false notion of superimposition and thereby realize the essential unity of the Self.<sup>1</sup> This superimposition is not secondary or figurative (*gaṇa*); it is false (*mithyā*). It is really pitiable that even learned people who distinguish between the subject and the object confuse these terms, like ordinary goatherds and shepherds.<sup>2</sup>

We do not admit any antecedent state of this world as its independent cause. We only admit an antecedent state of this world dependent on *Ishvara*. This state is called Nescience or Ignorance (*Avidyā*). It is the germinal power or causal potentiality (*bīja-shakti*). It is unmanifest (*avyakta*). It depends on *Ishvara* (*Parameshvarāshraya*). It is illusion (*māyāmayī*). It is the universal sleep (*mahāsupti*) wherein are slumbering the worldly souls forgetting their own real nature. All difference is due to Ignorance. It is not ultimate. Names and forms (*nāmarūpe*) are only figments of Ignorance. They are neither real nor unreal. *Ishvara*

<sup>1</sup> *Shārīraka-Bhāṣya* : I, 1, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* : I, 1, 4.



is limited by His own power of Nescience and appears as many phenomenal selves even as space appears as different 'spaces' limited by the adjuncts of jars etc. The omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of Ishvara are all due to the adjuncts of Ignorance; they are not ultimate. Where the essential unity of the Ātman is realised, they all vanish. Creation, therefore, is due to Ignorance. It is not ultimately real.<sup>1</sup>

Māyā is not only absence of knowledge; it is also positive wrong knowledge (mithyāchārarūpā). It is not only non-apprehension, but also misapprehension.<sup>2</sup> It makes the infinite appear as finite. It produces the manifold phenomena when in fact there is only the non-dual Ātman. It makes the unlimited Ātman appear as limited jīvas. It produces the false notions of plurality and difference. But it is not the real characteristic of Ātman or Brahman because it is destroyed by true knowledge, just as rope-snake is sublated by the knowledge of the rope. Brahman, through Avidyā, appears as the manifold world of names and forms, just as pure water appears as dirty foam.<sup>3</sup> The questions like: What is Avidyā? Whose is Avidyā? Where does it appear? etc. are useless (nirarthaka), for if Avidyā is not known they cannot be solved, and if the true nature of Avidyā is realized, the locus and object of Avidyā is also realized. Brahman itself is the locus and object of Avidyā.<sup>4</sup> Avidyā is the tāmasa-pratyaya. Its essential nature is to cover or hide the real (āvaraṇātmaikatvādividyā). It operates in three ways: (i) as positive wrong knowledge (viparītagrāhikā), (ii) as doubt (saṁshayo-pasthāpikā), and (iii) as absence of knowledge (agrahaṇātmikā).<sup>5</sup> Really it can do no harm to Reality,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : I, 4, 3; I, 4, 10; II, 1, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Prashna-Bhāṣya, I, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya, IV, 3, 20; I, 4, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Gītā-Bhāṣya, XIII, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

just as mirage-water cannot make the sandy desert muddy.<sup>1</sup>

Phenomenal world is often condemned by Śhaṅkara as unreal exactly in the spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism and of Gauḍapāda. It is said to be like mirage-water (*marīchyambhaḥ*) rope-snake (*raju-sarpa*), shell silver (*shukti-rajata*), dusty surface of the sky, (*ākasha-tala-malinatā*), city of Gandharvas (*Gandharva-nagara*), illusion (*māyā*), plantain-trunk (*kadalī-garbha*), dream (*svapna*), bubble (*jala-budbuda*) foam (*phena*), moving fire-brand (*alāta-chakra*), magical elephant (*māyānirmīta-hastī*), hair etc. seen floating in the atmosphere on account of defective vision (*keshondraka*; *timiradr̥ṣṭi*), illusion of double-Moon (*dvichandra-darshana*), pure magic (*Indra-jāla*) etc.<sup>2</sup> Like Gauḍapāda, Śhaṅkara also uses many words which were commonly used in Mahāyāna. We have already remarked that such words were the heritage of the common language and not the monopoly of Mahāyāna. But they definitely go to prove the influence of that age on Śhaṅkara. Many passages are found in Śhaṅkara which can be exactly compared with some Buddhist writings. For example, Śhaṅkara observes : Knowing the true nature of all phenomena which represent the cycle of birth-and-death, which are manifest and unmanifest, which are the cause of mutual production like the seed and the sprout, which are beset with innumerable evils, which are unreal like plantain-trunk, illusion, mirage, sky-castle, dream, bubble, foam, which are being destroyed every moment, and which are the result of ignorance, attachment and other defiled actions, and which consist of subject and object, merit and demerit, knowing such phenomena in their

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Kaṭha-Bhāṣya, I, 3, 13; II, 2, 11, II, 3, 1; Br̥ha dāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya, IV, 4, 6; Muṇḍaka-Bhāṣya, II, 1, 10; I, 2, Introduction, Prashna-Bhāṣya, VI, 4; Gītā-Bhāṣya, XIII, 26, 27; XV, 3, 4, Shāriraka-Bhāṣya, II, 1, 9, 13, 14.



reality, a Brāhmaṇa should practise renunciation.<sup>1</sup> The beginningless saṃsāra which is of the nature of suffering and which is rooted in Ignorance, is like a continually flowing stream of water.<sup>2</sup> Just as a person of defective vision sees double-Moon or mosquitoes and flies floating in the atmosphere, or just as a dreamer sees many things in a dream, similarly this world of plurality of names and forms, is imagined through Ignorance.<sup>3</sup> From the Absolute is this world-illusion expanded, like the magical illusion from a magician.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately the Absolute is not at all touched by it.<sup>5</sup>

It is very important to remember that the world is not condemned to be utterly unreal even by Mahāyāna and Gauḍapāda, much less by Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara uses such words only to emphasize the ultimate unreality of the world. The metaphors are metaphors and should not be stressed beyond the breaking-point. The world is only an appearance. It is not ultimately real. It becomes sublated when knowledge dawns. But so long as we are in this world, we cannot take it to be unreal. It is a practical reality. It is a workable hypothesis "absolutely necessary, though in the end most indefensible." Far from condemning this world Śaṅkara claims some sort of reality even for error and illusion. "No appearance is so low that the Absolute does not embrace it." It is the Real which appears and hence every appearance must have some degree of truth in it, though none can be absolutely true. Objects, seen in a dream are quite real as long as the dream lasts. The water in a dream can quench

<sup>1</sup> Muṇḍaka-Bhāṣya, I, 2, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, I, 2, Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Prashna-Bhāṣya, VI, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Gītā-Bhāṣya, XV, 4.

<sup>5</sup> यथा स्वयं प्रसारितया मायया मायावी त्रिष्वपि कालेषु न संस्पृश्यते, अवस्तुत्वात्, एवं परमात्मापि संसारमायया न संस्पृश्यत इति ।  
Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya, II, 1, 9.

the thirst in a dream. It is only when we are awake that we can realize the falsity of the dream state. So long as a rope is mistaken for a snake, it is sufficient to frighten the person who mistakes it. It is only when the rope is known that the person may laugh at his folly. Similarly so long as we are engrossed in Ignorance, the world is quite real for us. It is only when true Knowledge dawns that the world becomes sublated. Just as foam, bubbles, ripples, waves etc. exist separately, though in fact they are not different from water, similarly the subject and the object, the enjoyer and the enjoyed do exist separately, though in fact they are not different from Brahman.<sup>1</sup> The manifold world of experience is the effect; the highest Brahman is the cause. And the effect has no independent existence apart from the cause. Plurality of effects is only a creation of Ignorance.

To the objection that how can the unreal Māyā cause the real Brahman to appear as the phenomenal world and how, again, can false personalities through false means reach true end? Śaṅkaras's reply is that a person entangled in mud can get out of it through the help of mud alone, that a thorn pricked in the body can be taken out with the help of another thorn, and that there are many instances in this life which show that even unreal things appear to cause real things, e.g., a reflection in a mirror is unreal but it can correctly represent the reflected object; the roaring of a tiger in a dream is unreal but it may make the dreamer really tremble with fear and may awaken him.<sup>2</sup> The objection loses its force when it is remembered that the manifold world is taken to be real as long as the essential unity of the Ātman with the Brahman is not realized. As long

<sup>1</sup> Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, i, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II, 1, 14; Shatashlokī : 36; Prabodha-sudhākara : 99-102.



as this knowledge does not dawn, all secular and religious practices are taken to be real.<sup>1</sup>

The opponent again says that he fails to understand as to how unreal *Māyā* can cause the Brahman to appear. If the world is unreal, unreal means like the Vedānta texts cannot lead to real liberation; if the world is real, it cannot be *Māyā*. The dilemma which the opponent puts forth is : either frankly admit that the world is real or else remember that a philosophy which has nothing better to say than that unreal personalities are unreally striving in an unreal world though unreal means to attain an unreal end, is itself unreal. Verily, one bitten by a rope-snake does not die nor can one use mirage-water for drinking or bathing.<sup>2</sup>

Shāṅkara replies that the objection is wrong. If a person imagines himself to have been bitten by a poisonous snake, and if the imagination is very strong, it may result in heart-failure or in some psychological disaster. Again, the water in a dream can quench the thirst in a dream and a person bitten by a snake in dream may feel himself to be dead in the dream. We have seen that even unreal things can cause real things. The opponent hopelessly confuses the two different stand-points—the empirical and the absolute, even as he is confusing the imaginary with the empirical. The unreality of the effects of the imaginary standpoint (*prātibhāsika*) can be realized only when the empirical standpoint (*vyāvahārika*) is attained. Similarly the unreality of the empirical standpoint itself can be realized only

<sup>1</sup> सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राग् ब्रह्मात्मताविज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः, स्वप्न-व्यवहारस्येव प्राक् प्रबोधात् ।... तस्मात् प्राग् ब्रह्मात्मताप्रतिबोधात् उपपन्नः सर्वो लौकिको वैदिकश्च व्यवहारः ।

Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, 1, 14.

<sup>2</sup> कथं त्वसत्येन वेदान्तवाक्येन सत्यस्य ब्रह्मात्मत्वस्य प्रतिपत्तिरूपपद्येत ? नहि रज्जुसर्पेण दृष्टो भ्रियते । नापि मृगतृष्णिकाम्भसा पानावगाहनादि प्रयोजनं क्रियते इति । Ibid.

from the absolute standpoint (*pāramārthika*.) The falsity of the dream-objects is realized when the dreamer gets awake. And even then, though these dream-objects are sublated, the *consciousness* that the dreamer had experienced these objects in the dream is not sublated even in the waking state. Consciousness is, therefore, eternal and real. Right knowledge is not useless because, firstly, it removes ignorance, and secondly, it cannot be sublated. It is only from the absolute standpoint when right knowledge is attained that the Vedānta declares the world to be unreal.<sup>1</sup>

Many critics have failed to understand the real significance of *Māyā* or *Avidyā* and have therefore charged Śaṅkara of explaining the world away. But this charge is based on a shifting of the standpoints. Śaṅkara, as we have shown above, has granted some degree of reality even to dreams, illusions and errors. How can he, then, take away the reality of this world? The words 'real' and 'unreal' are taken by Śaṅkara in their absolute sense. Real means *real for all time* and Brahman alone can be real in this sense. Similarly, unreal means absolutely unreal like the hare's horn, which this practical world is not. Hence this world is neither real nor unreal. This shows its self-contradictory and therefore incomprehensible nature. It is relative, phenomenal, finite. But it is not illusory. It is *true for all practical purposes*. What does it matter to us, worldly people, if it is not *absolutely true* in the philosophical sense? When the '*reality*' which is denied to this world means '*reality for all time*,' the '*unreality*' which is attributed to it means '*non-eternality*.' Who can stand up and say that the world is not 'unreal' if 'unreal' means 'non-eternal'?

<sup>1</sup> यद्यपि स्वप्नदर्शनावस्थस्य सर्पदंशनोदकस्नानादिकार्यमनृतं तथापि तदवगतिः सत्यमेव फलं, प्रतिबुद्धस्याप्यबाध्यमानत्वात् ।... न चैयमवगतिरनर्थिका भ्रान्तिर्वेति शक्यं वक्तुम् । अविद्यानिवृत्तिफलदर्शनात्, बाधकज्ञानान्तराभावाच्च । प्राक् चात्मैकत्वावगतेरव्याहतः सर्वः सत्यानृतव्यवहारो लौकिको वैदिकश्च । Ibid.



Again, the world will be sublated only when knowledge dawns and not before. This should make us humbly strive after true knowledge rather than engage ourselves in futile quarrels. Shaṅkara's intention is perfectly clear—*none can condemn this world as unreal*; he who does it, is *not qualified* to do so and he who is qualified to do so, *will not do so*, for he would have risen above language and finite thought.

*Ishvara and Brahman* :—Brahman is the only Reality. It is absolutely indeterminate and non-dual. It is beyond speech and mind. It is indescribable because no description of it can be complete. The best description of it is through the negative formula of '*neti neti*' or 'not this, not this'. Yet Brahman is not an abyss of non-entity, because it being the Supreme Self stands self-revealed as the background of all affirmations and denials. The moment we try to bring this Brahman within the categories of intellect or try to make this ultimate subject an object of our thought, we miss its essential nature. Then it no more remains Unconditioned Consciousness, but becomes conditioned *as it were*. This Brahman, reflected in or conditioned by Māyā, is called *Ishvara* or God. *Ishvara* is the personal aspect of the impersonal Brahman. This is the celebrated distinction between God and the Absolute which Shaṅkara, following the Upaniṣads, makes. *Ishvara* is also known as *Apara Brahma* or lower Brahman as contrasted with the unconditioned Brahman which is called *Para Brahma* or Higher Brahman.

The phenomenal character of *Ishvara* is quite evident. He is the highest appearance which we have. Some critics have missed the significance of *Ishvara*. They believe that *Ishvara* in Advaita is unreal and useless. But they are sadly mistaken. Missing of the true significance of Māyā is at the root of this mistaken belief. *Ishvara* becomes 'unreal' only for *him* who has realized his oneness with Brahman by rising above

speech and mind. For us Īshvara is all in all. Finite thought can never grasp Brahman. And therefore all talks about Brahman are really talks about Īshvara. Even the words 'unconditioned Brahman' refer really to 'conditioned Īshvara', for the moment we speak of Brahman, He ceases to be Brahman and becomes Īshvara.

Īshvara or God is the Sat-chit-Ānanda, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. He is the Perfect Personality. He is the Lord of Māyā. He is immanent in the whole universe which He controls from within. He is the Soul of souls as well as the Soul of Nature. As the immanent inner ruler, He is called Antaryāmin. He is also transcendental, for in His own nature He transcends the universe. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of this universe. He is the Source of everything. He is the final haven of everything. He is the Concrete Universal, the Supreme Individual, the Whole, the Identity-in-difference. He is the object of devotion. He is the inspirer of moral life. He is all in all from the practical standpoint. Thus the description of Brahman which Rāmānuja gave at a much later date is essentially an elaboration of Shaṅkara's Īshvara.

Shaṅkara, like Kant, believes that God cannot be *proved* by our finite thought. All attempts to do so end in failure. They lead to, what Kant has called, the antinomies. The cosmological proof can give only a finite creator of this finite creation and a finite creator is no creator at all. The teleological proof can only point to the fact that a conscious principle is working at the root of creation. The ontological proof can give only an *idea* of God and not God as a *real object*. The Nyāya arguments to prove the existence of God are futile. God is an article of faith. Shruti is the only *proof* for the existence of God. As Kant falls back on faith, so Shaṅkara falls back on Shruti. Shaṅkara agrees with Gauḍapāda's view of Ajāti. There is no



*real* creation. God, therefore, is not a 'real' Creator. God alone is *real*; the creation is only an *appearance* of God.

Īshvara has been a taxing problem for the followers of Shaṅkara. According to some, Īshvara is the reflection of Brahman in Māyā, while jīva is the reflection of Brahman in Avidyā. According to others, Brahman, limited or conditioned by Māyā is Īshvara, while Brahman limited by Avidyā or the internal organ (which is a product of Avidyā) is jīva. The former view is called pratibimbavāda and the latter avachchhedavāda. Some regard jīva as the reflection of Īshvara. The defect in the Reflection Theory is that Brahman and Māyā both being formless, how can a formless original be reflected in a formless receptacle? To avoid this some have suggested the Theory of the Identity of the Original and the Reflected Image (bimbapratibimbābheda-vāda). But this too cannot be accepted. The defect in the Limitation Theory is as to how can Māyā or Avidyā constitute limitation to Brahman? Those who do not agree with either of these theories have suggested a third according to which Īshvara and jīva are inexplicable appearances of Brahman (ābhāsavāda). The post-Shaṅkarites have indulged in needless hair-splitting. The problem was not at all taxing to Shaṅkara. He uses the similes of the reflection of the Sun or the Moon in the waves or in the different vessels of water, the simile of the reflection of the red colour of the flower in the crystal, as well as the simile of the limitation of the universal space by the different 'spaces in the jars'. He uses them only as metaphors for their suggestive value. They should not be taken literally and stressed beyond the breaking-point. Shaṅkara himself seems to favour ābhāsavāda because for him Īshvara and jīva are the *inexplicable appearances* of Brahman. They are due to Māyā or Avidyā or Adhyāsa. They are only vivartas. The 'why' and the 'how' regarding Avidyā are illegitimate questions

and therefore an insoluble mystery. God is God only to the jīva who is labouring under Avidyā. God Himself never feels Himself as God ; He feels Himself essentially one with Brahman, for Avidyā in its negative aspect of concealment never operates on Him. God is the Lord of Māyā, while jīva is constantly troubled by Māyā. God always enjoys the Bliss of Brahman while jīva is tortured by the pangs of Avidyā.<sup>1</sup> When Brahman is viewed as saṃsāra, God, Soul and Nature arise simultaneously and when Brahman's own essence is realized, God Soul and Nature vanish simultaneously.

*Jīva and Brahman* :—Qualified Brahman is Ishvara. Phenomenally there is a difference between jīva and Ishvara. The former is the agent and the enjoyer, acquires merit and demerit, experiences pleasure and pain, while the latter is not at all touched by all this. The Muṇḍaka (III, I, 1) declares that “one bird (jīva) eats the sweet fruit, while the other (Ishvara) merely looks on.” Jīva enjoys (pibati), while Ishvara makes him enjoy (pāyayati). One is the enjoyer, the other is the ruler. The Katha (I, 3, 1 ; III, 3, 34) only figuratively says that both of these enjoy (chhatrinyāyena). But ultimately there is no difference at all between jīva and Brahman. Only so long as the jīva does not discard Nescience leading to duality and does not realize its own true nature, he remains the individual self. Slumbering in ignorance when he is awakened by the Shruti, he realizes that he is not body, senses, or mind, but is the non-dual universal Self—tat tvamasi (that thou art). Realizing his own true nature, he ever dwells in himself shining forth in his own true nature. Jīva through ignorance is regarded as tinged with the false notions of the ‘I’ and the ‘Mine’ which arise when mind through senses comes into contact with the fleeting sensations or ideas. It is viewed as something different from the

<sup>1</sup> स ईशो यद्वशे माया स जीवो यस्तयादितः ।



eternal and self-luminous Consciousness which is its immanent inner controller, as the reflection of that Consciousness, as identical with mind and its states, as associated with the seed of ignorance, as the possessor of momentary ideas etc. As long as these false notions about the self persist, the result is the empirical self and the objective world; and when these notions are destroyed by right knowledge, the result is liberation, though ultimately both bondage and liberation are phenomenal, because jīva is really non-different from Brahman.<sup>1</sup> Even the view that he becomes Brahman is only a verbal statement (upachāramātra), for he is always Brahman.<sup>2</sup> Just as a pure transparent white crystal is wrongly imagined to be red on account of a red flower placed near it, or just as the colourless sky is wrongly imagined to be sullied with dirt by the ignorant, or just as a rope is wrongly taken to be a snake in the twilight, or just as a shell is mistaken for silver, similarly the non-dual Ātman or Brahman is wrongly imagined to be the empirical self. Just as the Sun or the Moon appears many on account of the reflection in the different waves or vessels of water or just as the same space appears on account of the adjuncts of jars etc. as different 'spaces', similarly the same Self appears as so many phenomenal selves on account of Nescience.<sup>3</sup> Śaṅkara says that he who wants to explain the Scripture as teaching that jīva is not really Brahman, and who thus wants to preserve the ultimate reality of bondage and liberation, is indeed meanest among the learned (paṇḍitāpasada).<sup>4</sup> To refute such and other vain speculations which hinder the realization

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : I, 1, 5; I, 2, 6; I, 2, 20; Kena-Vākya-Bhāṣya : I, 3; III, Introduction; Muṇḍaka-Bhāṣya : III, 1, 1; II, 2, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Brhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : VI, 4, 6.  
Compare Viṃśatikā : K, 26-27;

<sup>3</sup> Shāṭīraka-Bhāṣya . I, 3, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Gītā-Bhāṣya : XIII, 2.

of the essential unity of the self and to show that there is only one real Self, eternal and unchanging, which is the Luminous Body of Pure Consciousness (Vijñāna-dhātu),<sup>1</sup> and which, through its own power, manifests itself as many, and that except this there is no other Reality, no other Pure Consciousness, is the aim of the Shāriraka-Bhāṣya.<sup>2</sup>

*Ātman and Brahman* :—Ātman is the same as Brahman. It is Pure Consciousness. It is the Self which is Self-luminous and which transcends the subject-object duality and the trinity of knower, known and knowledge, and all the categories of the intellect. It is the Unqualified Absolute. It is the only Reality. Brahman is everything and everything is Brahman. There is no duality, no diversity at all. This Self can never be denied, for the very idea of denial presupposes it. It cannot be doubted, for all doubts rest on it. All assertions, all doubts, all denials presuppose it. It is not adventitious or derived (āgantuka). It is self-proved or original (svayamsiddha). All prāmaṇas are founded on it. To refute this Self is impossible, for he who tries to refute it is the Self.<sup>3</sup> The knower knows no change, for eternal existence is his very nature.<sup>4</sup> "Never is the sight of the seer destroyed" says the Bṛhadāraṇyaka. "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman."<sup>5</sup> He who is the knower is the Self, for he is omnipresent.<sup>6</sup> Everything else

<sup>1</sup> Compare with Dharmadhātu or Dharmakāya.

See Trimshikā : K. 30 ;

<sup>2</sup> तेषां सर्वेषामात्मैकत्वसम्बन्धनप्रतिपक्षभूतानां प्रतिबोधायेदं शारीरक-  
मारब्धम् । एक एव परमेश्वरः कूटस्वनित्यो विज्ञानधातुरविद्यया  
मायया मायाविबद्धनेकया विभाव्यते नास्यो विज्ञानधातुरस्तीति ।

Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : I, 3, 19.

<sup>3</sup> य एव हि निराकर्ता तदेव तस्य स्वरूपम् । Ibid, II, 3, 7.

<sup>4</sup> न ज्ञातुरन्यथाभावोस्ति सर्वदा वर्तमानस्वभावत्वात् । Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति ।

<sup>6</sup> यो हि ज्ञाता स एव सः, सर्वात्मकत्वात् ।

Kena-Vākya-Bhāṣya : I, 3.



is relative and therefore ultimately unreal. The Self alone is not relative. It is therefore, self-proved.<sup>1</sup> The tragedy of human intellect is that it tries to know everything as an object. But whatever can be presented as an object is necessarily relative and for that very reason unreal. The knower can never be known as an object. Ultimately there is no distinction between the true knower and pure knowledge. "How, O dear, can the knower be known?" says the Br̥hadāraṇyaka. Hence all these who rely on the intellect are deluded because they can never truly describe the Self either as existent or as non-existent. It is essentially indescribable, for all descriptions and all categories fail to grasp it fully.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact Brahman ultimately transcends all categories. The best method of describing it, therefore, is by negative terms. But if we want to describe it positively, the best that we can say is that it is Pure Consciousness which is at once Pure Existence and Pure Bliss. True, we cannot say that Brahman is *self-conscious* of its consciousness or that *it enjoys* its own bliss. These determinations of the intellect fail here. The fact is that Brahman itself is Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss—all in one. It is its very nature to be such. It cannot be regarded as a substance having these qualities or even as a subject knowing or feeling these qualities. All distinctions of substance and qualities, of subject and object, all determinations of the intellect cease here.<sup>3</sup> Dvaita does not deserve to be taught, for everybody normally assumes it in all phenomenal practices. Therefore taking the normal dualism which people naturally take for granted on account of natural Ignorance, the Shāstra teaches that though dualism is a practical necessity, yet it is not ultimately real.

<sup>1</sup> यद्वचनपेक्षं तत्स्वत एव सिद्धम् । Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : II., 1.

<sup>3</sup> Br̥hadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya: III, 9, 28.

Brahman is the only reality. It is the End (upeya). And Brahmanvidyā or the knowledge of the non-difference of the jīvatman and the Paramātman, is the means (upāya) to realize this end. When the end is realised the Shāstra itself is transcended.<sup>1</sup>

Existence and consciousness are one. 'The Real is the Rational and the Rational is the Real',<sup>2</sup> But ultimately Brahman is devoid of all characteristics. It cannot be defined as mere Existence and not as Consciousness, for the Shāstra says that it is All-Consciousness (Vijñānaghana); nor can it be defined as mere Consciousness and not as Existence, for the Shāstra says: "it is"; nor can it be defined as both Existence and Consciousness, for to admit that Brahman is characterized by Existence different from Consciousness or by Consciousness different from Existence, is to admit duality in Brahman; nor can it be defined as characterized by Existence non-different from Consciousness for if Existence is Consciousness and Consciousness is Existence why should there be any controversy at all whether Brahman is Existence or Consciousness or both?<sup>3</sup> Again, to say, that Reality exists but is not known is a contradiction in terms, for at least Reality is known as unknowable by intellect. It is like saying that 'coloured objects exist but there is no eye to see them'.<sup>4</sup> Reality, therefore, must exist for us and it is only Pure Consciousness that can ultimately exist. We cannot know it by finite intellect but we can realize it directly through pure reason. It is non-dual Consciousness where all distinctions, all plurality, all determinations, all qualities, all characteristics, all categories and all concepts are transcended. All

<sup>1</sup> Ibid: II, 1, 1.

<sup>2</sup> सत्तैव बोधो बोध एव च सत्ता । Shāriraka-Bhāṣya III, 2, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid,

<sup>4</sup> Prashna-Bhāṣya: II, 2.



determinations of language and intellect are merged in this indeterminate and unqualified Reality. Being and not-being, one and many, qualified and unqualified, knowledge and ignorance, action and inaction, active and inactive, fruitful and fruitless, seedful and seedless, pleasure and pain, middle and not-middle, *shūnya* and *ashūnya*, soul and God, unity and plurality etc. etc.—all these determinations do not apply to the Absolute. He who wants to grasp the Absolute by any of these determinations, indeed tries to roll up the sky like a skin or tries to ascend the space like a stair-case or wishes to see the footprints of fish in water or of birds in sky.<sup>1</sup>

The Shāstra, therefore, becomes silent after saying—‘not this, not this’. If a man does not understand that he is a man when he is told that he is not a non-man, how can he be able to understand, then, if he is told that he is a man?<sup>2</sup> The two ‘no-es’ in the formula ‘*neti neti*’ are meant for emphasizing the fact that whatever can be presented as an object is ultimately unreal. They cover the entire field of objective existence and point out that it is not real. There is no better way of describing the Absolute than this negative method. But it should be never missed that all these negations pre-suppose and point towards the positive Brahman.<sup>3</sup> The Absolute can be unknowable only for those who are ignorant of the Vedānta tradition, who do not know the means of right knowledge and who desperately cling to the world. True, the Absolute cannot be known as an object by the intellect. But being the only Reality and being always present and so not at all foreign, it is directly realised through

<sup>1</sup> Aitareya-Bhāṣya : II, 1, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : II, 3, 6.

Reason or Supreme Wisdom (Samyagjñāna).<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'neti neti' negates all characteristics of Brahman, but it does not negate Brahman itself. It implies that there is something about which something is denied. Appearances can be negated only with reference to Reality. Effects alone can be negated, for they are unreal. But the cause, the Brahman cannot be negated, for it is the ultimate ground on which all effects or phenomena are superposed.<sup>2</sup>

*Knowledge and Action* :—Shaṅkara repeatedly asserts that the Absolute can be realized through knowledge and knowledge alone. Karma and upāsana are subsidiary. They may help us in urging us to know Reality and they may prepare us for that knowledge by purifying our mind (sattvashuddhi), but ultimately it is knowledge alone which, by destroying ignorance, the root-cause of this world, can enable us to be one with the Absolute. The opposition of knowledge and action stands firm like a mountain.<sup>3</sup> They are contradictory (viparīte) and are poles apart (dūramete). Those who talk of combining knowledge with action, says Shaṅkara, have perhaps not heard the Bṛhadāraṇyaka nor are they aware of the glaring contradiction repeatedly pointed out by the Shruti and the Smṛti.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge and action are opposed like light and darkness. Actions are prescribed for those who are still in ignorance and not for those who are enlightened. Knowledge only removes ignorance and

<sup>1</sup> Gītā-Bhāṣya : XVIII, 50.

<sup>2</sup> किञ्चिद्भिः परमार्थमालम्ब्यापरमार्थः प्रतिषिध्यते यथा रज्ज्वादिवु सर्पादयः । तत्र कल्पितरूपप्रत्याख्यानेन ब्रह्मणः स्वरूपावेदनमिदमिति निर्णीयते । तदास्यैवं हीदं समस्तं कार्यं नेति नेतीति प्रतिषिद्धम् । युक्तं च कार्यस्य...प्रतिषेधनं न तु ब्रह्मणः, सर्वकल्पनामूलत्वात् । नहि प्रपञ्चप्रतिषेधरूपादादेशनात् अन्यत् परमादेशनं ब्रह्मणोऽस्तीति । Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : III, 2, 22.

<sup>3</sup> ज्ञानकर्मणोर्विरोधः पर्वतवदकम्प्यः । Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : 2.

<sup>4</sup> Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : II, 4, Introduction.



then Reality shines forth by itself.<sup>1</sup> A liberated sage, however, performs actions without any attachment and works for the uplift of humanity. Shāṅkara's own life bears ample witness to this fact.

*Knowledge and Liberation* :—Ultimate Reality (Pāramārthikam Vastu) can neither be asserted nor denied by knowledge. Knowledge does nothing else except removing ignorance. Shāstra only generates right knowledge (jñāpakam). It does nothing else (nakāram).<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge of Brahman, which leads to eternal bliss, does not depend on the performance of any act, for Brahman is already an accomplished fact. Religious acts which lead to prosperity depend on human performance. Religious Texts enjoin injunctions or prohibitions. Knowledge merely instructs.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of Brahman culminates in immediate experience and is already an accomplished fact.<sup>4</sup> Action, whether secular or Vedic, can be done, misdones or left undone. Injunctions, prohibitions, options, rules and exceptions depend on our thinking. But knowledge leaves no option to us for its being this or that or for its existence or non-existence. It is not in our hands to make, unmake, or change knowledge. Our thinking cannot make a pillar a man. Knowledge of Brahman, therefore, depends on Brahman itself. It is always of the same nature because it depends

<sup>1</sup> Isha-Bhāṣya : 2, 7, 8, 9, 18 ; Kena-Vākya-Bhāṣya : I, Int., 1, 2 ; Katha-Bhāṣya : I, 2, 1 ; I, 2, 4 ; Muṇḍāka-Bhāṣya : I, Int. ; III, 1, 4 ; Taittirīya-Bhāṣya : I, 1, Int. ; Chhāndogya-Bhāṣya : I, 1, Int. ; Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : I, 4, 7 ; I, 4, 10 ; II, 4, Int. ; III, Int. ; Gīta-Bhāṣya : Int. ; II, 10 ; II, 69 ; XVIII, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : I, 4, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Shārīraka-Bhāṣya : I, 1, 1.

<sup>4</sup> अनुभवावसानत्वाद् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य ।

—Ibid : I, 71, 2.

on the existent thing.<sup>1</sup> True knowledge is produced by Pramāṇas and conforms to its objects. It can neither be produced by hundreds of injunctions nor can it be destroyed by hundreds of prohibitions. Knowledge is not mental activity, because it depends not on mind but on the existent fact.<sup>2</sup> There is also no succession in knowledge. Once it dawns, it dawns for ever and at once removes all ignorance and consequently all bondage. Liberation, therefore, means removal of ignorance by knowledge.<sup>3</sup> That blessed person who has realized Reality is liberated here and now.<sup>4</sup> The Shruti says: 'just as a slough cast off by a snake lies on an ant-hill, similarly does this body lie.' This is Jivanmukti. Final release (Videhamukti) is obtained after the death of the body. The Shruti says 'the only delay for him is the death of the body.' Just as a potter's wheel goes on revolving for sometime even after the push is withdrawn, similarly the body may continue to exist even after knowledge has dawned, though all attachment with the body is cut off.<sup>5</sup> Like an arrow shot from the bow, the body continues to reap the fruits until it expires; but no new actions are accumulated.<sup>6</sup>

*Ultimate Criterion of Truth* :—We have to discuss here the claims of Revelation, Reason and Intuition,

<sup>1</sup> कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथाकर्तुं वा शक्यं लौकिकं वैदिकं च कर्म । ... न तु वस्तुत्वं नैवमस्ति नास्तीति वा विकल्प्यते । विकल्पनास्तु पुरुषबुद्धपेक्षाः । न वस्तुयायात्म्यज्ञानं पुरुषबुद्धपेक्षम् । किं तर्हि ? वस्तुतन्त्रमेव तत् । ब्रह्मज्ञानमपि वस्तुतन्त्रमेव, भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् । Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यं यथाभूतविषयं च न तत् नियोगशतेनापि कारयितुं शक्यते, न च प्रतिषेधशतेनापि वारयितुं शक्यते । नहि तत् पुरुषतन्त्रं वस्तुतन्त्रमेव हि तत् । Ibid: III, 2, 21.

<sup>3</sup> मोक्षप्रतिबन्धनिवृत्तिमात्रमेवात्मज्ञानस्य फलम् । Ibid: I, 1, 4.

<sup>4</sup> सिद्धं ज्ञातृोऽपि विदुषोऽज्ञारीरत्वम् । Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid: IV, 1, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Chhândogya-Bhāṣya: VI. 14- 2.



each of which wants to be crowned as the ultimate criterion of truth in Shāṅkara. Shāṅkara attaches supreme importance to the revealed truths of the Vedas which are regarded as the "breath of God." (*yasya nishvasitam vedāh.*) But it is only *jñānakāṇḍa* that is stressed, not the *karmakāṇḍa*. He who condemns Shāṅkara as a mere theologian "whose faith is pinned to the Vedas", must be either hopelessly ignorant of Shāṅkara-Vedānta or be himself nothing less than a prejudiced dogmatist. Shāṅkara never accepts the Shruti blindly. It is only because he fully knows that the Shruti is the result of the highest intellect of the ancient sages, that it is the most valuable pearl that the ocean of human experience can ever boast to yield after having been churned by the rod of the intellect, in short, it is only because Shāṅkara is fully conscious of the fact that the Shruti is the shining pure gold tested by the touch-stone of reason and experience, that he builds his many-storeyed magnificent palace of the Advaita on the firm foundation of the Shruti.

Many passages may be quoted from Shāṅkara where he says that Brahman, being supersensuous, can be realized only through Revelation or Shruti.<sup>1</sup> Here too, intellect is not driven out of the palace of philosophy, but kept there as an ancillary to the Revelation-Queen.<sup>2</sup>

Shāṅkara repeatedly asserts that discursive intellect cannot grasp Reality. Brahman cannot become the object of perception as it has no form, and it does not lend itself to inference and other means, as it has

<sup>1</sup> For example,

तद् ब्रह्म वेदान्तशास्त्रादेवावगम्यते . . तस्मात् सिद्धं ब्रह्मणः शास्त्र-  
प्रमाणकत्वम् । Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : I. 1, 4.

<sup>2</sup> वेदान्तवाक्यमीमांसा तदविरोधितर्कोपकरणा । Ibid : I, 1, 1.

अनुमानमपि वेदान्तवाक्याविरोधि प्रमाणम् । Ibid : I, 1, 2.

तर्कमप्यादत्तव्यम् ।

Ibid : II, 1, 4:

no characteristic mark.<sup>1</sup> Partly accepting the position of Bhartṛhari which is criticized by Shāntarakṣita, Śaṅkara remarks that reasoning, because it depends on individuals, has no solid foundation. Arguments held valid by some, may be proved fallacious by others more ingenious.<sup>2</sup> Like Asaṅga, Śaṅkara declares intellect to be insecure and emphasizes the Āgama.<sup>3</sup> But his criticism is directed towards *kutarka*. Shruti, says Śaṅkara, cannot be set aside by mere logical quibbling.<sup>4</sup> A false logician is a quibbler saying whatever he likes.<sup>5</sup> They, whose minds are fouled by logical quibbling, are to be pitied because they do not know the tradition of the Vedānta.<sup>6</sup> What grand feats of reasoning are displayed by such logicians who are bulls without horns and tails ! They are princes among liars and among those who violate the tradition of the wise. They cannot enter the Fort of Brahman which is open only to those who are of excellent wisdom, who have the knowledge of the Shāstra and blessings of the teacher.<sup>7</sup> Debators, like carnivorous animals for the sake of bait, fight against one another and fall from Reality. Themselves deluded they also delude innocent people. It is only for the sake that people, who desire liberation which can be obtained by knowledge alone, should reject

<sup>1</sup> रूपाद्यभावाद्धि नायमर्थः प्रत्यक्षगोचरः लिङ्गाद्यभावाच्च नानुमानादीनाम्।  
Ibid : II, 1. 11.

<sup>2</sup> न प्रतिष्ठितत्वं तर्काणां शक्यमाश्रयितुं पुरुषमतिवरूप्यात् ।  
Ibid : II, 1, 11.

<sup>3</sup> तर्कस्त्वनवस्थितो भ्रान्तोऽपि भवति । Kena-Vākya-Bhāṣya : I, 3.  
Compare with Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra : I, 12  
See Supra : p. 148

<sup>4</sup> श्रुतेर्वचनं न कुतर्कबुद्ध्या मूषा कर्तुं युक्तम् ।  
Chhāndogya-Bhāṣya : VIII, 12, 1

<sup>5</sup> Kāṭha-Bhāṣya : I, 2, 9.

<sup>6</sup> कुतर्कदूषितान्तःकरणा अनुकम्पनीयाः । Bṛ. Bhāṣya : II 1, 20,

<sup>7</sup> अहो ! अनुमानकीशलं दर्शितमपुच्छसृज्जैस्ताकिक्वलीबर्धेः ।

Ibid



false views, says Shaṅkara, that he criticizes other doctrines, not for the interest in discussion for its own sake.<sup>1</sup>

It is, therefore, only logical quibbling or kutarka that is condemned by Shaṅkara. Sutarka or intellect is admitted as supreme in the phenomenal world where its authority is said to be unquestionable. Only an intellectual, a rational being can understand the meaning of the Shrūti. It cannot reveal itself to a beast. As Yāska said that he who only reads or remembers the Veda but does not understand its meaning is only a *coolie* carrying a load of the Veda on his head and is no better than a pillar.<sup>2</sup> Shaṅkara never asks us to accept the Shruti blindly. He is never satisfied with a mere quotation from the scripture on a vital metaphysical issue but always defends it with reason.<sup>3</sup> If we find apparent contradictions in the Shruti, we should interpret other passages of the Shruti in the light of that one central doctrine of the Shruti which appeals to reason. If the Shruti contradicts reason, reason must be our guide for it is nearer our experience.<sup>4</sup> Even if hundred Shrutis declare with one voice that fire is cool and without light or that the Sun does

<sup>1</sup> परस्परविरुद्धार्थकल्पनात् आमिषार्थिन इव प्राणिनोऽन्योन्यविरुद्ध-  
मानार्थदशित्वाद् दूरमेवापकृष्यन्ते (तात्त्विकाः) । अतस्तन्मतमनादृत्य  
वेदान्तार्थतत्त्वमेकत्वदर्शनं प्रति आदरवन्तो ममूहवः स्युरिति तात्त्विक-  
मतदोषप्रदर्शनं किंचिदुच्यते अस्माभिर्न तु तात्त्विकवत् तात्पर्येण ।

Prashna-Bhāṣya : VI, 3.

<sup>2</sup> स्थाणुरयं भारहारः किलाभूत् अधीत्य वेदं न विजानाति योऽर्थम् ।

<sup>3</sup> वाक्यनिरपेक्षः स्वतन्त्रस्तद् युक्तिप्रतिषेधः क्रियते ।

Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, 2, 1.

अद्वैतं ..... शक्यते तर्कणापि ज्ञातुम् ।

Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya : III, 1,

<sup>4</sup> यथा च श्रुतीनां परस्परविरोधे सत्येकवशेनेतरा नीयन्ते, एवं प्रमाणान्तरविरोधेऽपि तद्वशेनैव श्रुतिर्नीयेत । दृष्टसाम्येन चादृष्टमर्थं समर्थयन्ती युक्तिरनुभवस्य संनिवृत्त्यते, विप्रकृष्यते तु श्रुतिरिति ह्य-  
मात्रेण स्वार्थाभिधानात् । Shāriraka-Bhāṣya : II, , 4.

not shine, we cannot accept them.<sup>1</sup> Reason is the sole means of knowing truth and falsity.<sup>2</sup> We cannot question the validity of the intellect in the phenomenal world. Here "You obey it while you rebel." Even the statement that "intellect stands condemned" must be made by intellect itself.<sup>3</sup>

Infra-relational intuition is the animal instinct and supra-relational true intuition is the same as Pure Reason. Svānubhava or Svānubhūti or immediate experience or direct self-realization is the same as Pure Reason. Here finite intellect casts off its garb of relationality which was put upon it by ignorance and becomes one with the Absolute which is Pure Consciousness. Discursive intellect confesses its impotence only to be rejuvenated with new life and eternal vigour, and what appears to be its suicide is, in fact, its consecration. Shall we not say, then, with deeper meaning, that the ultimate criterion of truth in Śaṅkara is Pure Reason or Pure Intuition in this truer sense?

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<sup>1</sup> नहि श्रुतिशतमपि क्षीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वेति ब्रुवत्प्रामाण्यमुपैति ।

Gītā-Bhāṣya : XVIII, 66.

Also Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya : II, 1. 20.

<sup>2</sup> बुद्धिर्हि नः प्रमाणं सदसतोर्वात्मावगमे ।

Kāṭha-Bhāṣya : VI, 12.

<sup>3</sup> नहि प्रतिष्ठितस्तर्कं एव नास्तीति शक्यते वक्तुम् । एतदपि हि तर्काणामप्रतिष्ठितत्वं तर्केणैव प्रतिष्ठाप्यते ।

Shāṅkara-Bhāṣya : II, , 111.



## CHAPTER VII

### POST-SHANKARA VEDĀNTA

*Maṇḍana-Sureśvara-Equation* :—Before we deal with the Post-Shāṅkarites, we may briefly refer to this controversy. Tradition identifies Maṇḍana with Sureśvara and the latter with Viśvarūpa. There is no reason to disbelieve that the household name of the Saṁnyāsin Sureśvara, the famous disciple of Shāṅkara, was Viśvarūpa. But the identification of Maṇḍana with Sureśvara is a very controversial matter. Prof. M. Hiriyanna has challenged the traditional view by pointing out important doctrinal divergences between Maṇḍana and Sureśvara.<sup>1</sup> And Prof. S. Kuppuswami Śāstri has tried to give a death-blow to this tradition in his long Introduction to the Brahmasiddhi. The following have been pointed out by these scholars as the important doctrinal differences between Maṇḍana and Sureśvara :

- (1) Maṇḍana advocates *Dr̥ṣṭiśiṣṭivāda*—later on championed by Prakāśhānanda—by maintaining that the seat, support or locus (*Āshraya*) of *Avidyā* is the individual *Jīva*, while Brahman is only the object (*Viśaya*) of *Avidyā*. Neither in itself nor as conditioned by or reflected in *Māyā* is Brahman the cause of this world. It is only the individual *Jīvas* who on account of their inherent ignorance (*Naiścargikī Avidyā*) create the world-appearance which is destroyed by adventitious knowledge (*Agantukī Vidyā*). Individual experiences agree due to similarity and not due to identity. The world-appearance has no objective basis. Sureśvara rejects this distinction maintaining, with

<sup>1</sup> J.R.A.S., 1923 and 1924 ; Introduction to the *Naiścarmya-siddhi*.

Śhaṅkara, that Brahman itself is both the locus and the object of Avidyā. The controversy led, later on, to the two important schools of Advaita Vedānta, the Bhāmati School of Vāchaspati who followed Maṇḍana, and the Vivaraṇa School of Prakāśhātman who followed Sureshvara.

- (2) Maṇḍana maintains Prasaṅkhyānavāda. The knowledge arising out of the Upaniṣadic Mahāvākyas is only mediate, indirect and relational. Liberation is the direct realization of Brahman. Hence this knowledge in order to lead to liberation must have its mediacy removed by meditation or Upāsanā. Sureshvara rejects this and, following Śhaṅkara, strongly upholds the view that knowledge arising out of the Mahāvākyas is at once immediate and directly leads to liberation, while Upāsanā, howsoever useful it may be towards liberation, cannot be taken as the cause of liberation. Mahāvākya-jñāna is as direct as the knowledge produced by the statement "Thou art the tenth" in the parable in which each one of the ten persons, leaving out himself, counted only nine.
- (3) Maṇḍana supports Bhāvādvaita on Sadadvaita or Ens-Monism. Brahman is the only positive entity and monism excludes only another positive entity. Dissolution of ignorance (Avidyādhvaṁsa or Prapañchābhāva) is a negative reality and its existence does not violate monism. But according to Śhaṅkara and Sureshvara, negation as a separate entity cannot exist. Dissolution of ignorance is not a negative entity; it is at once positive Brahmanhood.
- (4) Maṇḍana favours Jñāna-karma-samuchchaya-vāda. He has a leaning towards Mīmāṃsā. Performance of Vedic rites is very conducive



towards liberation. Ignorance is removed by Ignorance (Actions) alone and when it has been thus removed what remains is Pure Knowledge. Sureshvara is a bitter enemy of such combination. Like night and day, action and knowledge can never combine. Action may be useful for purification, but it is knowledge and knowledge alone which leads to liberation.

- (5) For Maṇḍana, real liberation is Videha-mukti. He regards Jivanmuktas as highly advanced Sādhakas only, not Siddhas. For Sureshvara, who follows Shaṅkara, Jivan-mukti is real mukti and Jivanmuktas are Siddhas.
- (6) Maṇḍana accepts Viparīta-khyāti while Sureshvara accepts Anirvachanīya-khyāti.
- (7) Maṇḍana's attitude towards Shaṅkara is that of a self-confident rival teacher of Advaita and his Brahma-siddhi is based on the Prasthāna-traya of Vedānta, while Sureshvara frankly admits that he is a devoted disciple of Shaṅkara and he bases his works on the Shaṅkara-Bhāṣya.

Professors Hiriyantha and Shastri also maintain that in none of the available authoritative works on Advaita is Maṇḍana identified with Sureshvara, while in some works on Vedānta, they are distinguished as two different persons. The tradition which identifies them is based on works dealing with the life of Shaṅkara which are a hopeless mixture of legend and history.

We readily admit the doctrinal divergences between Maṇḍana and Sureshvara pointed out by these learned scholars. Existing evidence goes in favour of Maṇḍana and Sureshvara being two different persons. But there is one fact which cannot be easily dismissed. There is still room for the hypothesis that Vishvarūpa Mishra whose pet or popular name or title might have been

Maṇḍana, and who was probably at the end of a long line of Pre-Shaṅkarite teachers of Advaita who accommodated Mīmāṃsā also, came under the spell of Shaṅkara, modified and changed his views, became a devoted disciple of Shaṅkara, and was then known as the Saṁnyāsin Sureshvara. There is room for the evolution of the ideas of a man and more so when he comes under the spell of a great personality. Moreover, many parallel passages are found in the Brahmasiddhi of Maṇḍana and Brhadāranyaka-vārtika of Sureshvara.<sup>1</sup> Nothing can be said with absolute certainty and the controversy, therefore, requires further research. Here we shall refer to the author of the Brahmasiddhi as Maṇḍana and to the author of the Naiṣkarmyasiddhi and Vārtika as Sureshvara.

*Avidyā or Māyā*:—Avidyā or Ignorance, says Maṇḍana, is called Māyā or illusion and Mithyā-bhāsa or False Appearance because it is neither the characteristic nature (Svabhāva) of Brahman nor an entity different from Brahman (Arthāntaram). It is neither real (Satī) nor absolutely unreal (Atyantamasatī). If it is the characteristic nature of something else, then whether it is identical with or different from it, it is a reality and cannot be called Avidyā. On the other hand, if it is absolutely unreal, then it is like the sky-lotus and can serve no practical purpose which in fact it does. It is therefore indescribable (Anirvachanīyā) as it can be described neither as existent nor as non-existent. And all philosophers in order to be consistent must necessarily accept it as such.<sup>2</sup>

Maṇḍana maintains that the locus of Avidyā is the individual Jīva. Ultimately the Jīvas are identical with the Brahman but phenomenally they are diverse. Diversity is the product of Avidyā. Brahman cannot

<sup>1</sup> Prof. P. P. Subrahmanya Saṁtri's Foreword to the Brahmasiddhi; p. x-xiii.

<sup>2</sup> सर्वप्रवादिभिश्चेत्यमियमास्थेया । Brahmasiddhi: p. 9.



be diverse because being of the nature of Pure Consciousness it is devoid of *Avi*lyā. This *Avidyā* should not belong to the *Jīvas* because the *Jīvas* themselves are the product of this *Avidyā*. Thus *Avidyā* can belong neither to the Brahman nor to the *Jīvas*. But this, says Maṇḍana, should not shock us because *Avidyā* is itself an inconsistent category and that therefore its relation with the *Jīvas* should also be inconsistent. If *Avidyā* becomes a consistent category, it would no more remain *Avidyā*, but would become real.<sup>1</sup>

*Avidyopādānabhedavādin*s propose another solution which may be accepted. They say that *Avidyā* depends on the *Jīvas* and the *Jīvas* themselves depend on *Avidyā* and this cycle is beginningless so that, like the seed and the sprout, there is neither an ultimate beginning of *Avidyā* nor of the *Jīvas*.<sup>2</sup> If Brahman is tainted with *Avidyā* then even the liberated soul would remain ignorant; and if Brahman itself is bound and becomes afterwards liberated, then the liberation of one would mean the liberation of all. Thus it is clear that *Avidyā* cannot belong to Brahman.<sup>3</sup> It belongs to the *Jīvas*.<sup>4</sup> Through *Avidyā* the *Jīvas* become entangled in the cycle of birth and death and through *Vidyā* they become liberated. *Avidyā* is inherent in them; *Vidyā* is not natural to them. This inherent ignorance is destroyed by adventitious knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Hearing of the Vedānta texts, right thinking, meditation etc. help the dawn of true knowledge by which one attains to Brahmanhood. Explaining the 11th Verse of the *Isha* (*Avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayā-mṛtamashnute*), Maṇḍana remarks that

<sup>1</sup> अनुपपद्यमानार्थेव हि माया । उपपद्यमानार्थत्वे यथार्थभावान् न माया स्यात् । Ibid : p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> जीवानामविद्याकलुषितत्वं, न ब्रह्मणः । Ibid : p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> जीवेषु...अविद्यैव हि नैसर्गिकी; तस्या आगन्तुक्या विद्यया प्रविलयः ।

Ibid : p. 12.

Ignorance (Avidyā) can be destroyed by Ignorance (Karma etc.) alone and when it has been thus destroyed, what remains is Pure Knowledge or the Immortal Self shining in its Pure Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Maṇḍana accepts two kinds of Avidyā—absence of knowledge (Agrahaṇa) and positive wrong knowledge (Anyathāgrahaṇa). *Vāchaspati Mishra*, following Maṇḍana remarks that Brahman is associated with two kinds of Ignorance (Avidyā-dvitaya-sachiva).<sup>2</sup> One is the psychological ignorance. It is, as explained by Amalānanda, “the preceding series of beginningless false impressions” (Pūrvāpūrvabhrama-saṁskāra). The other is an objective entity forming the material cause of the mind as well as of the material world outside. It is positive (Bhāvarūpa), beginningless (Anādi), objective (Jāda), and of the nature of power (Shakti). It is indescribable (Anirvachanīya). It is the material stuff the appearances are made of. Like the Prakṛti of Yoga, it is this Avidyā into which all world-products together with psychological ignorance and false impressions disappear during Mahā-pralaya, where they remain as potential capacities (Sūkṣmeṇa shaktirūpeṇa), and out of which they appear again.

The locus of Avidyā, according to *Vāchaspati* also, is the Jīva. The illusion is psychological for which each individual is himself responsible. Now, a difficulty arises: Avidyā resides in the Jīva, but the Jīva is himself a product of Avidyā. Maṇḍana says that Avidyā, being itself inconsistent, its relation with the Jīva is also inconsistent. He also accepts the view of the Avidyopādānabhedavādin that they form a beginningless cycle. *Vāchaspati* solves the difficulty by maintaining that the Jīva arises due to a false illusion which illusion itself is due to another previous false illusion and so on *ad infinitum*, that psychological ignorance is a beginningless chain of false illusions

<sup>1</sup> Ibid: p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Bhāmati: Opening verse.



in which each succeeding illusion is due to its preceding illusion.

An appearance, says Vāchaspati, is an appearance because it is wrongly identified with the self-revealing Consciousness and is thus given a semblance of reality. It is afterwards sublated by right knowledge. Appearances, in order to be appearances, must be confused with Brahman. So Avidyā has Brahman as its object, which it hides and through which it makes its appearances appear. Appearances are neither existent (Sat) nor non-existent (Asat), neither real nor unreal. They are not existent because they are contradicted afterwards. They are not non-existent like the horns of a hare because they appear, they are expressed, they are experienced as real. They are not real because they are made of Avidyā. They are not unreal because they have Brahman, with which they are confused, as their underlying ground. When Brahman is realized they are set aside because their very existence is due to their being confused with Brahman.

For *Sureshvara*, unlike Maṇḍana and Vāchaspati, Avidyā is based, not on the individual Jīva, but on the Brahman itself. Brahman is the locus as well as the object of Avidyā. It is the Pure Self or the Brahman itself which through Avidyā appears as this world. Avidyā is beginningless error (Bhṛāntishchirantānī). It is the root-cause of saṃsāra and is sublated by knowledge.<sup>1</sup> It is indescribable as it is neither real nor unreal. It is an inconsistent category, a self-contradictory principle. Had it been consistent, it would not have been Avidyā at all. It is based on Brahman and yet at the same time it is a baseless illusion opposed to all reason and cannot stand a logical scrutiny even as darkness cannot stand the Sun.<sup>2</sup> Nothing can

<sup>1</sup> Naiṣkarmyasiddhi : II, 103.

<sup>2</sup> सेयं भ्रान्तिर्निरालम्बा सर्वव्यापिरोषिणी ।

सहते न विचारं सा तमो यद् वद् दिवाकरम् ॥ Ibid : III, 66.

surpass the inconsistency and shamelessness of Avidyā; it despises the logical reality as well as the ontological Absolute and yet it exists as the Brahman itself !<sup>1</sup>

Padmapāda, Prakāśhātmā and Sarvajñātmā also believe that Brahman itself is the locus as well as the object of Avidyā. Avidyā, says *Padmapāda*, is a beginningless (Anādi), material (Jaḍātmikā) power (Shakti). Its function is to obstruct the self-revealing nature of Brahman. It is the canvas on which are painted Ignorance, Actions and Past Impressions—a complex which produces the individual Jīvas.<sup>2</sup> Brahman reflected in Avidyā is the Jīva (Pratibimbavāda). The Jīva is a complex (Granthi) of Brahman or Ātman and Avidyā, just as a “red crystal” is a combination of the really white crystal and the reflection in it of the red flower. This ego-complex is the main pillar of this world-theatre.<sup>3</sup>

Avidyā is also called Adhyāsa or superimposition. It is the appearance of “this” (Atadrūpa) as “that” (Tadrūpa). It is the appearance of a thing (this) as that thing (that) which in fact it is not (Atadrūpe tadrūpāvabhāsaḥ). This, verily, is false (Mithyā). *Padmapāda* distinguishes between the two meanings of falsehood. It may mean, firstly, simple negation (Apahnavavachana), and secondly, something indescribable (Anirvachanīyātāvachana).<sup>4</sup> Avidyā is not a simple negation; it is something which cannot be described either as real or as unreal. It is an inconsistent category. There is nothing impossible for Māyā. It is expert in making even the impossible appear as possible.<sup>5</sup>

1 अहो ! बाह्यमविद्याया न कश्चिदतिवर्तते ।

प्रमाणं वस्तुनादृत्य परमात्मेव तिष्ठति ॥ Ibid : III, 111.

2 जीवत्वापादिकाविद्या-कर्म-पूर्वप्रज्ञासंस्कार-चित्रमिति । Ibid : p. 20.

3 अहङ्कारग्रन्थिः संसारनृत्यशालामूलस्तम्भोऽभिधीयते । Ibid : p. 35.

4 मिथ्याशब्दो द्वययोऽपह्नववचनोऽनिर्वचनीयतावचनश्च । Ibid : p. 4.

5 न हि मायायामसम्भावनीयं नाम । असम्भावनीयावभासचतुरा हि सा ।

Ibid : p. 23.



*Prakāśhātmā* elaborates these ideas and proves that Avidyā is something positive (Bhāvarūpā). Padma-pāda says that Brahman associated with Māyā is the cause of this world-appearance. *Prakāśhātmā* points out three possible alternatives: (1) Both Brahman and Māyā, like two twisted threads of a rope, are the joint cause of this world; (2) Brahman having Māyā as its power is the cause; and (3) Brahman having Māyā supported on it is the cause. But in all these alternatives it is the Brahman which is the cause since Māyā is regarded as dependent on it.<sup>1</sup>

*Sarvajñātma Muni* also holds that Brahman is the locus and the object of Avidyā. Avidyā, resting on Brahman and obscuring its real nature, gives rise to threefold appearances; God (Ishvara), Soul (Jīva) and Nature (Jagat). All the three are ultimately unreal because Avidyā has no independent status. When Brahman is associated with Avidyā, there are two false entities—(1) Avidyā, and (2) Brahman associated with Avidyā. Reality is the Pure Brahman, the true ground (Adhiṣṭhāna) which underlies all appearances. Brahman associated with Avidyā is only a false Ādhāra. *Sarvajñātma Muni* holds that illusion is not psychological but transcendental. Avidyā resides neither in the individual Jīva (which is itself a product of Avidyā) nor in the Pure Brahman (which in fact Avidyā cannot touch), but in Brahman as it reveals itself as the individual Jīvas (Pratyak-chit).<sup>2</sup>

*Vimuktātmā* says that Avidyā or Māyā is neither identical with nor different from nor both identical with and different from Brahman. If it is to be something substantial or real (Vastu) it must fall within one of these alternatives. But it falls within neither. Hence it is not real. But it is not absolutely unreal (Avastu) too, for it is expressed and experienced in ordinary life.

<sup>1</sup> Pañchapādikā-Vivaraṇa : p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Saṅkṣepa-Shāstrīka : II, 211.

Hence, the only conclusion to which we are drawn is that it is indescribable (Anirvacchanīya). But it is indescribable, stresses Vimuktātmā, only in the sense that it cannot be described either as real or as unreal, and not in the sense that nothing whatsoever can be said about it.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Māyā is regarded by him as ignorance, as positive, as power, as indescribable and as the material cause of all world-appearances.<sup>2</sup> Though indescribable, it can be destroyed by knowledge, since by its very nature it is such that it cannot resist the stroke of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> To stop at the world-appearance is to confess philosophical impotence. Avidyā is not real, for the real is only the Brahman. Avidyā is not unreal, for it is experienced as real. This indescribable nature of Avidyā makes it an inconsistent category. But this Sadasadvilakṣaṇatva or Anirvacchanīyatva or Durnirūpatva or Durghaṭatva of Avidyā is not its defect but its glory, for had Avidyā been not such, it would not have been Avidyā at all.<sup>4</sup>

Avidyā, for *Śrīharṣa* also, is ignorance, is positive, is material, and is indescribable as it is neither real nor unreal. It is therefore false.

Avidyā or Ajñāna, says *Chitsukha*, is beginningless and positive and is destroyed by knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Ignorance

1 तेन सदसत्त्वाभ्याम् अनिर्वचनीया, न पुनरवाक्येति ।

Iṣṭa-siddhi : p. 35.

2 Ibid : p. 69.

3 अनिर्वाच्योऽप्यबोधः सकृत्सर्ववद् दहते विद्या । Ibid : VIII, 4.  
न्यायाभातासहिष्णुत्वमविद्यालक्षणं यतः ॥ Ibid : VIII, 18.

4 दुर्घटत्वमविद्याया भूषणं न तु दूषणम् ।  
कथंचिद्वधटमानत्वेऽविद्यात्वं दुर्घटं भवेत् ॥ Ibid : I, 140.

5 अनादिभावरूपं यद् विज्ञानेन विलीयते ।  
तदज्ञानमिति प्राज्ञा लक्षणं संप्रचक्षते ॥  
अनादित्वे सति भावरूपं विज्ञाननिरस्यमज्ञानम् ।

Tattva-pradīpikā : p. 57.



is in fact neither positive nor negative, yet it is called positive to emphasize the fact that it is not merely negative.<sup>1</sup> An example illustrating the positive character of ignorance is : "I do not know whether what you say is true". Here what is said is known but it is not known whether it is true. Another example is when one, after deep sleep, gets up and says : 'I slept happily; I knew nothing'. This is a positive experience of ignorance in deep sleep.<sup>2</sup> The knowers of Vedānta have declared that all things are the objects of the self-revealing Consciousness either as known or as unknown.<sup>3</sup>

An objection is raised by Prabhākara that the false cannot be presented in experience. Experience is always of the true and error is due, not to misapprehension, but to non-apprehension of difference. Refuting this Akhyāti view, Chitsukha remarks that as long as error lasts, the object is not remembered but actually presented to consciousness. The presentation of the false, therefore, is a fact of experience. The presented silver (in the case of shell-silver) cannot be called absolutely non-existent like the hare's horn as that cannot be presented even in illusion or error. Its practical reality is admitted. Nor can it be called existent for it is contradicted afterwards. It is therefore indefinable or indescribable. It is exactly this character of being indescribable either as existent or as non-existent, says Chitsukha, that constitutes the falsity of all world-experiences. Udayana's criticism that 'indefinability' means the inability to define or describe, i.e. the silence of the ignorant (Niruktiviraha) misses the mark for the term 'indefinable' or 'indescribable' in Vedānta means that which cannot be described either as real or as unreal.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> भावाभावविलक्षणस्याज्ञानस्याभावविलक्षणमात्रेण भावत्वोपचारात् । Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : pp. 58-59.

<sup>3</sup> उक्तं च सम्प्रदायविद्धिः "सर्वं वस्तु ज्ञाततया अज्ञाततया वा साक्षि-  
चैतन्यस्य विषय एव" इति । Ibid : p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> प्रत्येकं सदसत्त्वाभ्यां विचारपदवीं न यत् ।

गाहते तदनिर्वाच्यमाहुर्वेदान्तवेदिनः ॥ Ibid : p. 79.

Similarly *Anandajñāna* also says that indescribability is not inability to describe ; its essence lies in proving that all possible ways in which the opponent wants to describe a thing are untenable.<sup>1</sup>

Avidyā, for *Vidyāranya* too, is a beginningless power which is neither real nor unreal. It cannot stand dialectical scrutiny. The essential nature of Avidyā consists in this that it cannot be described in any way by the finite intellect and it is therefore false for it cannot bear logical examination.<sup>2</sup> When true knowledge dawns, Avidyā with all its world-products is realised as something which never was, never is and never will be *real*.<sup>3</sup> This indefinability is not a defect but a merit of Avidyā.<sup>4</sup> Avidyā is the same as Māyā for both are indefinable.<sup>5</sup>

*Ātman or Brahman*:—Ātman or Brahman is the only reality. It is the locus and the object of Avidyā. It is the ground underlying all world-appearances. Diversity, says *Maṇḍana*, is rooted in unity and not *vice versa*. One sees many reflections of the Moon in many moving ripples of water. But the Moon does not become many on account of its reflections in various waves. It is absurd to believe that so many reflected “Moons” appear as one Moon. Similarly it is far more

<sup>1</sup> येन येन प्रकारेण परो निर्वक्तुमिच्छति ।

तेन तेनात्मनाऽयमस्तदनिर्वाच्यता मता ॥ Tarka-Saṅgraha :

p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> अतः प्रमाणतोऽशक्याऽविद्याऽस्येति परीक्षितम् । Bṛ-Vārtika-sāra :  
Int., Adhikāriparikṣā : 115.

अविद्याया अविद्यात्वमिदमेवात्र लक्षणम् ।

मानयोगाऽसहिष्णुत्वमसाधारणमिष्यते ॥ Ibid, 117.

<sup>3</sup> तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्योत्त्वसम्यग्बुद्धीजन्ममात्रतः ।

अविद्या सह कार्येण नासीदस्ति भविष्यति ॥ Ibid : 114.

<sup>4</sup> विचारासहत्वं चाविद्याया अलंकार एव ।

Vivaraṇaprameyasāṅgraha : p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> अतो मायैवाविद्या । Ibid : p. 133.



reasonable to believe that one Brahman on account of its special potency appears as the world of diverse phenomenal objects than to believe that diverse phenomenal objects on account of false notion of similarity appear as if they are one. All difference is, therefore, grounded in the supreme Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

Reality, says *Sureshvara*, is one and so diversity cannot be ultimate. The unqualified non-dual Absolute which transcends human thought is described in innumerable inadequate ways by different people just as in the famous parable of the 'Blind Men and the Elephant,' the same elephant was described in various inadequate ways by the blind men.<sup>2</sup> Everything else may change, everything else may be destroyed, everything else may be momentary except this self because the very conceptions of change, destruction and momentariness presuppose it.<sup>3</sup> This Self is the judge pre-supposing whose existence and to whom addressing their case, philosophers, like lawyers, propelled by heated and head-aching arguments, feverishly fight and delude each other.<sup>4</sup>

Reality, according to *Vāchaspati*, is the Pure Self (Svaprakāsha Chit) which is Pure Consciousness or the self-luminous immediate self-revelation which can never be contradicted. It is the underlying ground of all phenomena. *Māyā* or *Avidyā* may be regarded as the pivot of Advaita provided we do not forget that the Reality which underlies the world-appearance is

<sup>1</sup> Brahmasiddhi : II, 32.

<sup>2</sup> तदेतदद्वयं ब्रह्म निर्विकारं कुबुद्धिभिः ।

जात्यन्धगजदृष्टचेव कोटिशः परिकल्प्यते ॥

Naiṣkarmyasiddhi : II, 93.

<sup>3</sup> मत्तोऽन्यद्रूपमाभाति यत् यत् स्यात् क्षणभङ्गि हि । Ibid : II, 78.

<sup>4</sup> इमं प्राश्निकमुद्दिश्य तर्कज्वरभृशातुराः ।

त्वान्छिरस्कवचोजालैर्मोहयन्तीतरेतरम् ॥ Ibid : II, 59.

Brahman. The thesis which Vimuktāmā has proved is not māyā, but Brahman as it underlies Māyā.<sup>1</sup>

*Padmapāda* says that the nature of the self is pure self-revealing Consciousness which, when appearing with and manifesting the objects is called experience or Anubhava, and when shining forth by itself is called the Ātman.<sup>2</sup> *Prakāśhātmā* also maintains that Consciousness is self-revealing and that its manifestation is due to no other cause.<sup>3</sup>

*Chitsukha* gives a full exposition of the Self. He takes many definitions of self-revelation (*Svaprakāsha*) and rejects them after dialectical examination. He then offers his own definition. Self-revelation, says Chitsukha, may be defined as that which is entitled to be called immediate even though it cannot be known as an object of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Desires, feelings, will, emotions and other subjective states are not cognized in the same way in which external objects are. Though they appear to be immediate, they have really no right to be called immediate for they are only unreal impositions on the self-revealing Consciousness. External objects, on the other hand, though they are found to be unreal and therefore non-immediate when the self is realized, yet so far as the phenomenal existence is concerned, have every right to be called immediate; but they are known as objects of knowledge. It is only the self which is immediate and yet not an object of knowledge. Our definition, therefore, has the merit, says Chitsukha, of distinguishing self-revelation from the mental states on the one hand and from the external objects on the other.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> अतो मायाःसैको मयेष्टः सिद्धः । *Iṣṭasiddhi* : p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Pañchapādikā* : 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Pañchapādikā-Vivaraṇa* : p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> न तावत् स्वयंप्रकाशे लक्षणासंभवः । अवेद्यत्वे सत्यपरोक्षव्यवहार-योग्यतायास्तल्लक्षणत्वात् । *Tattvapradīpikā* : p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* : pp. 9-11.



Moreover, besides being immediate, self-revelation can also be inferred. The inference is as follows :—

Immediate Experience is Self-revealing,  
because it is immediate;

That which is not immediate cannot be self-revealing, as for example, a pot.<sup>1</sup>

The main argument in favour of self-revelation is that if the existence of the ultimate self-revealing Consciousness is not admitted, infinite regress would yawn before us. Again, the fact of experience itself proves that immediate experience is self-revealing because none can doubt his own experience or can stand in need of confirming or corroborating it. Everything else may be doubted, everything else may require proof, but not the self-revealing Consciousness because even the notions of doubt and proof presuppose it.<sup>2</sup>

This self-revealing Consciousness is not the consciousness of consciousness or awareness of awareness like the *Anuvyavasāya* of the *Naiyāyika* or the *Jñātātā* of the *Mīmāṃsaka*, for this conception is not tenable. When one says : 'I know that I know the pot,' what happens is that the first awareness has already ceased when the second awareness begins and so the former awareness cannot be directly cognized by the subsequent awareness. So when one knows that one knows the pot, it is only the cognized object, the pot, that is known, not the knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The self-revealing Consciousness is the Self itself for the Self is of the nature of self-revealing Consciousness (*Ātmā samvidrūpaḥ*). Except that of identity

<sup>1</sup> अनुभूतिः स्वयंप्रकाशा, अनुभूतित्वात्, यन्नैवं तन्नैवं यथा घटः, इत्यनुमानम् ।  
Ibid : p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> विदितो घट इत्यत्र अनुव्यवसायेन घटस्यैव विदितत्वमवसीयते न तु वित्ते । Ibid : p. 18.

there can be no relation between Consciousness and Self.<sup>1</sup> When the Shruti says that the sight of the seer is never destroyed, it only stresses that knowledge is eternal; it does not in fact declare any connection between the sight and the seer or the knowledge and the knower. It says so on account of the convention or usage of language, like the phrase 'the head of Rāhu' even when there is no difference between Rāhu and the head.<sup>2</sup>

*Dialectical arguments for the ultimate unreality of difference*:- Brahman, according to Maṇḍana, is the only reality and it does not tolerate difference. Monism alone can explain all philosophical concepts satisfactorily. Ultimately the subject-object duality must be transcended. If it were real, then the gulf between the two could never be bridged over and the two could never be related. The absolutely pure Self (Draṣṭā) which knows no change can never be really related to the changing objects (Dṛshya).<sup>3</sup>

Maṇḍana tries to refute difference by means of dialectical arguments. In fact, he says, we do not perceive any "difference." Three alternatives are possible regarding perception: (1) perception may manifest a positive object; (2) it may distinguish an object from other objects; and (3) it may manifest a positive object and may also distinguish it from other objects. In the third alternative again there are three possibilities: (a) manifestation of a positive object and its distinction from other objects may be simultaneous; (b) first there may be positive manifestation and then negative distinction; and (c) first there may be negative distinction and then positive manifestation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ज्ञानात्मनोः सम्बन्धस्यैवाभावात् । Ibid : p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> चित्तेः शुद्धत्वात् अपरिणामात् अप्रतिसंक्रमात् च ।

Brahmasiddhi : pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid : p. 44.



Now, in the first alternative where only a positive object is manifested, no 'difference' is perceived. The second alternative is untenable because pure negation is an impossibility. Perception always manifests some positive object; it does not negate anything. Hence perception cannot reveal mere difference.<sup>1</sup> Possibilities (a) and (c) of the third alternative are untenable for positive manifestation and negative distinction can be neither simultaneous nor can there be first negative distinction without positive manifestation. Negation is necessarily rooted in affirmation. Difference or distinction is a relation between two positive objects which it presupposes. Even the negation of a non-entity like the sky-lotus is only a denial of the false relation between two positive entities—the sky and the lotus. Possibility (b) of the third alternative is also untenable, for perception is one unique process and there cannot be two or more moments in it.<sup>2</sup>

There can be four possible conceptions, says Maṇḍana, regarding unity and diversity :

- (1) Either we should say like Mīmāṃsaka *Samisargavādins* that both unity and diversity are separately real ;
- (2) Or we should say like Bhartṛprapañcha and the Jaina *Anekāntavādins* that reality is both unity and diversity ;
- (3) Or we should say like the Buddhist (Svatantra-vijñānavādins) *Ātyantikabhedavādins* that only diversity is real and that unity is an appearance ;
- (4) Or we should say like the Vedāntin *Abhedavādins* that only unity is real and that diversity is an appearance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> आहुर्विधातुं प्रत्यक्षं न निषेद्धं विपरिचितः ।

नैकत्वं आगमस्तेन प्रत्यक्षेण विरुध्यते ॥ Ibid : p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : pp. 39-45.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : p. 60.

Maṇḍana vehemently criticizes the first three views showing their hollowness and upholds the fourth view.

Against the first view he remarks that things cannot be twofold in their nature, that it is impossible to imagine logically that realities can be two or more.

Against the second view he urges that it is absurd to imagine that the same thing can be unity as well as diversity both. Admitting and negating the same thing in the same breath, the theory of Probability lands in monstrous philosophical contradictions.

The third view is that of the *Svatantra-Vijñānavādins*. They maintain that objects by their very nature are different from one another and that therefore when an object is perceived its difference from other objects is also perceived simultaneously by that very act. Maṇḍana replies that if difference be the very nature of things, then all things would be of the nature of difference and thus there would be no difference among them at all. Again, difference being "formless," the objects themselves would be "formless." Again, difference is of the nature of negation and therefore objects themselves would be of the nature of negation. Again, difference being dual or plural, no object would be regarded as a single object because the same thing cannot be both one and many.<sup>1</sup>

The Buddhist replies that an object is regarded as essentially of the nature of difference only in relation to other objects and not in relation to itself. Maṇḍana rejoins that objects are produced from their own causes and they do not, for their existence, stand in need of a relation to other objects. Relation is a mental operation. It is subjective. It cannot,

<sup>1</sup> नेदद्वेत् वस्तुनः स्वभावः, नैकं किञ्चन वस्तु स्यात् । Ibid : pp. 47-48.



therefore, be called the essential nature of things which are objective.<sup>1</sup>

The Buddhist tries to prove the difference among objects by his theory of efficient causation. But Maṇḍana points out that he cannot do so. The same fire, for example may 'burn' and at another time may 'cook', and still at another time may simply 'shed light'. The difference between the burning, cooking and illuminating activities of the same fire does not prove that they are really "three" different fires. It only proves that differences are unreal because they are grounded in the same fire.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the so-called diversity of the phenomenal world is rooted in the supreme Brahman. The Buddhist objects that things are different from one another because they have got different potencies or powers. If there were only unity and no diversity then there would have been simultaneous production and destruction of all things and then milk would have produced oil and oil-seeds curd. Maṇḍana replies that the so-called different potencies or powers are in fact only different qualities of the same thing like the burning, cooking and illuminating qualities of the same fire. Difference in qualities does not imply difference in substance. Just as the same fire has diverse activities of burning, cooking and illuminating, similarly it is the extraordinary potency of the one supreme Brahman, a potency which is beyond human thought that enables the Brahman to appear as this diverse phenomenal world.<sup>3</sup> Differences, therefore, are purely imaginary.

Maṇḍana supports the fourth view which advocates that unity alone is real while diversity is only an

<sup>1</sup> पुरुषस्योपपत्तिं च न हि वस्त्वनुवर्तते । Ibid : p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> अर्थक्रियाकृते भेदे रूपभेदो न लभ्यते ।

दाहपाकविभागेन कुशानुर्नहि भेदवान् ॥ Ibid : p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : pp. 54-55.

appearance. The Moon does not become "many Moons" on account of being reflected in various waves.<sup>1</sup> Difference is an appearance and is grounded in Brahman and not *vice versa*.

*Vimuktātmā* also observes that difference is unreal and is rooted in the Brahman. He says that the relation between the perceiver (*dṛk*) and the perceived (*dṛshya*) or between the conscious subject and the external objects is indescribable and therefore false. The subject and the object are neither different nor identical nor both.

The self and the world are not different because difference is possible between two perceived entities and the self is never perceived.<sup>2</sup> Again, difference is not of the nature (*Svarūpa*) of the differing entities ; for had it been so, difference would not have been dependent on a reference to another. Nor is difference a characteristic (*Dharma*) different from the differing entities ; for in that case this difference, in order to be known, would require another difference and the latter yet another and so on *ad infinitum*. Again, the perceiving Self, being self-luminous, is always present and can never be negated. So neither negation nor difference is possible. The perceiving Self is of the nature of perception hence its non-perception is impossible. Negation is of the nature of non-perception. Hence negation is impossible. And difference is of the nature of negation. So difference too is impossible.<sup>3</sup>

The perceiving Self and the perceived world are also *not identical* : for if they were so, the perceiver would be characterized by all the limitations and

<sup>1</sup> प्रत्येकमनुविद्धत्वादभेदेन मृषा मतः ।

भेदो, यथा तरंगाणां भेदाद् भेदः कलावतः ॥ Ibid : p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> दृशोऽदृश्यत्वात् । *Iṣṭasiddhi* : p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : pp. 3-10.



differences of the perceived world. Simultaneous perception (Sahopalambha) cannot prove their identity, for they are perceived as two and not one.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the perceiver is self-luminous and is never cognized as an object, while the perceived is never self-revealing is always cognized as an object and cannot be experienced independently of the perceiver. Again, if they were identical, all ordinary experiences and practices of this world would come to a standstill. So the Self which is pure Consciousness can never be identified with the perceived world.<sup>2</sup>

And the Self and the world, again, cannot be regarded as *both identical and different*; for the Bhedābheda view is self-contradictory. Identity and difference are opposed like light and darkness.

So the manifold world-appearance is neither different from nor identical with nor both different from and identical with the Pure Self.<sup>3</sup> The world therefore is false and with it all its "difference" is also false.

*Śrīharṣa* also asserts that neither perception nor inference can contradict the ultimate fact of non-duality as taught in the Upaniṣads. Difference is unreal. It cannot be the essential nature of things that differ (Svarūpabheda), because had it been that it would have been identical with the differing things themselves. Again, difference cannot be mutual negation (Anyonyābhāva) like that pot is the negation of cloth and cloth is the negation of pot, because if the identity of the pot and the cloth were absolutely unreal, then the negation of such identity would also be absolutely meaningless. Again, difference cannot be

<sup>1</sup> इयोहि सहभानम्, नैकस्यैव ।...अतस्तयोर्भेदो भात्येव तवापि, अन्यथा सहोक्त्ययोगात् । Ibid : pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> सर्वव्यवहारलोपप्रसंगान् नाभेदो दुग्दृश्ययोः । Ibid : p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> न भिन्नः, नाप्यभिन्नः, नापि भिन्नाभिन्नः अनुभूतेः प्रपञ्चः । Ibid : p.24.

regarded as the possession of opposite characteristics (Vaidharmya), because were it so then these opposite characteristics would require further opposite characteristics to distinguish them from one another and so on *ad infinitum*. Difference, therefore, is unreal. It is a product of Avidyā. From the empirical viewpoint it is valid because we perceive it. We do not say, says Shriharsa, that difference is absolutely unreal. We deny only its ultimate reality.<sup>1</sup> The empirical validity of difference, however, cannot contradict the ultimate reality of Advaita, for the two are on two different levels. Difference is due to Avidyā and so it is ultimately unreal. To contradict Advaita we require an ultimately real difference and such difference is an impossibility.<sup>2</sup> The reality of Advaita cannot be set aside even by hundreds of arguments.<sup>3</sup> To reject Advaita is to throw away the most precious wish-fulfilling jewel fortunately procured, into the deep sea.<sup>4</sup>

*Madhusūdana Sarasvatī* in his Advaita-siddhi, which he wrote to prove the truth of non-dualism and to reject the views of the opponents,<sup>5</sup> ruthlessly criticizes the Dvaitins and refutes all their arguments in favour of difference. Vyāsārtha, the author of Nyāyāmṛta, is his main target.

<sup>1</sup> न त्वयं भेदस्य सर्वयैवाऽऽस्त्वमभ्युपगच्छामः, किञ्चायं पारमार्थिकम-  
सत्त्वम् । अविद्याविद्यमानत्वं तु तदीयमिष्यत एव ।

Khaṇḍana-Khaṇḍa-Khāḍya : p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> अद्वैतं हि पारमार्थिकमिदं पारमार्थिकेन भेदेन बाध्येत, न त्वविद्या-  
विद्यमानेन । Ibid : p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> सेयमद्वैतबुद्धिर्न तर्कशतमवतार्यं प्राज्ञैरपनेया । Ibid : 59.

<sup>4</sup> धीधना ! बाधनायाऽस्यास्तदा प्रज्ञां प्रयच्छथ ।

क्षेप्तुं चिन्तामणिं पाणिलब्धमन्धो यदीच्छथ ॥ Ibid : p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> बोधाय वादिविजयाय च सत्वरणाम् ।

अद्वैतसिद्धिरियमस्तु मुदे बुधानाम् ॥ Advaitasiddhi : 4.



*Further Dialectical Exposition of the Ultimate Unreality of the World and Dialectical Refutation of the Categories and Concepts of the Intellect:—*

*Shrīharṣa* and *Chitsukha* undertake a thorough enquiry into the nature of the categories and concepts of the intellect and point out their utter dialectical hollowness. Their main polemic is against *Nyāya*. The *Naiyāyikas* and the *Mīmāṃsakas* have given various definitions of right knowledge (*Pramā*), of the means of right knowledge (*Pramāṇa*) such as perception, inference etc., of the various categories of experience (*Padārtha*) such as substance, qualities etc., and of the concepts involved in these categories. *Shrīharṣa* and *Chitsukha* take all these definitions one by one, mercilessly criticize them and with their irresistible dialectic tear them into pieces pointing out that they are all “baseless fabrics of a vision that leaves nothing behind.”

All that is known (*Prameya*) has a defined real existence, says the *Naiyāyika*. All that is known is indefinable and therefore unreal, rejoin *Shrīharṣa* and *Chitsukha*. Reality is Pure Consciousness which can be directly realized but cannot be known by discursive intellect. It is beyond the four categories of understanding. Like the *Chatuṣkoṭivīnirmukta* of the *Shūnya-vādins*, *Shrīharṣa* calls it as “the Fifth Only” or the *Pañchamakōṭimātra*.<sup>1</sup> Intellect which works with its concepts and categories is necessarily relational. Therefore it can give us only a relative world. The entire world together with all its experiences is necessarily phenomenal. It is a semblance of reality. It is a workable reality. Its reality is based on usage, custom and convention. The moment we examine this so-called real world and its experiences dialectically, they all give way. And intellect too, because it itself arises with this world, gives way. The world is found to be indefinable. It is neither real nor unreal nor both. Hence the inevitable conclusion is that it

<sup>1</sup> *Naiṣadha-Charita* : XIII, 36.

is indescribable. And because it is indescribable it is false. It is based on Avidyā and is only an appearance. The criticisms offered by Śrīharṣa and Chitsukha are mostly destructive. They have undermined not only the particular definitions of Nyāya but also the very concept of definition which has been shown as fraught with inherent contradictions.

Chitsukha who has commented on the Khaṇḍana of Śrīharṣa and who has also written an independent work *Tattvapradīpikā*, popularly known as *Chitsukhī*, has fulfilled to a great extent the work left unaccomplished by Śrīharṣa. Śrīharṣa tried to show that all the concepts and the categories of the intellect were indefinable being fraught with inherent contradictions. But in practice he mainly criticized and refuted only the particular definitions of the Nyāya writers. Udayana formed the main target of his attack. He did not also develop his interpretations of the concepts of the Advaita Vedānta. Chitsukha gives us an accurate analysis and an elaborate interpretation of the main concepts of the Advaita. Possessing almost the same dialectical genius as that of Śrīharṣa, Chitsukha does not restrict himself to refuting only the definitions of the various categories given by the Naiyāyikas, but often refutes other definitions and also the concepts underlying these definitions. In his refutation of the Nyāya categories, he mostly follows Śrīharṣa, though he sometimes gives new arguments also. Śrīharṣa's main purpose is to show that the categories are indefinable and therefore unreal. Chitsukha's main purpose is to show that though they are mere appearances, they are appearances of the Real.

Śrīharṣa's work is mainly polemical. Like the Shūnyavādins, he has no thesis of his own to prove. He has no definitions to offer. How can he when he says that all definitions are false and that this entire world together with all its experiences is indescribable? Although the criticisms of Śrīharṣa are



directed mainly against the particular definitions of the Naiyāyikas and others, they can be used with equal force against all views and against all definitions of all systems. Shrīharṣa himself asks us to apply his criticisms against other definitions and other systems.<sup>1</sup> He goes even to the extent of assuring us that people, by simply mugging up his arguments like a parrot, can conquer all persons in philosophical discussions.<sup>2</sup>

Shrīharṣa has written a long introduction, called the Bhūmikā to his work Khaṇḍana. This introduction gives us an excellent summary of his philosophy. Formal verbalism which often mars the main body of the work is conspicuous by its absence here. Realisation of truth (Tattvanirṇaya) and victory over the opponent (Vādi-vijaya), says Shrīharṣa are the two aims of philosophical discussion (Shāstrārtha). In the Bhūmikā the former aim predominates. The main defect which we find in the main body of the work is formal verbalism. Shrīharṣa often criticizes the language of the definitions rather than their thought. There is no doubt that had the main body of the Khaṇḍana been written in the same spirit in which its Bhūmikā is written the work would have been simply matchless. Perhaps Shrīharṣa may be excused if we remember that in his time, digvijaya was the fashion of the day. But all the same Dr. S. N. Dasgupta is right in remarking : "If these criticisms had mainly been directed towards the defects of Nyāya thought, later writers would not have been forced to take the course of developing verbal expressions (in order to avoid the criticisms of Shrīharṣa) at the expense of philosophical profundity and acuteness. Shrīharṣa may therefore be said to be the first great

<sup>1</sup> तत्तुल्योहस्तदीयं च योजनं विषयान्तरे ।

शृङ्खला तस्य शेषे च त्रिधा भ्रमति मत्क्रिया ॥ Khaṇḍana : p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> धीरा ! यद्योक्तमपि कीरवदेतदुक्त्वा

लोकेषु दिग्विजयकौतुकमातनुष्वम् ॥ Ibid : p. 2.

writer who is responsible indirectly for the growth of verbalism in later Nyāya thought.”<sup>1</sup>

*Shrīharṣa* says that this world with all its manifold phenomena cannot be called existent because dialectical reasoning proves that it is not ultimately real; and it cannot be called non-existent too because then the practical utility of all world-experiences would collapse. The world-appearances therefore are indescribable either as real or as unreal. Hence they are false.

Here the opponent says: If you are unable to describe and define the world you better go to some learned teachers and learn how to describe and define the world-experiences. *Shrīharṣa* replies: This contemptuous outburst of the opponent would have been valid only if we had said that a particular person or persons was or were unable to define this world. Our point, which the opponent has unfortunately missed, is that we maintain that the world together with all its experiences is by its very nature such that it cannot be described either as existent or as non-existent. Indefinability is the very nature of all world-experiences. All that can be known by the intellect is necessarily indefinable. Our worthy opponent who seems to be proud of his ability to define the world should know that he is grossly mistaken because even ‘description’ or ‘definition’, being a thing which is known, is by its very nature ultimately indescribable and indefinable.<sup>2</sup>

The main point which *Shrīharṣa* wants to press is that the world-experiences being mere appearances are neither real nor unreal and are therefore false,

<sup>1</sup> History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> यदपि निर्वक्तुमसामर्थ्यं गौरव उपास्यन्तां येभ्यो निरुक्तयः शिक्ष्यन्ते इत्यु-  
पालम्बवचनं, तत् तदा शोभेत यदि मेयस्वभावानुगामिनीयमनिर्वचनीय-  
तेति न ब्रूयुः वक्तृदोषादिति च वदेयुः । यस्तु वादी निरुक्त्यभिमानं घटे  
स निर्वक्तुं न तु शक्यति वक्तव्यदोषात् । Khaṇḍana : pp. 31-32.



that our intellect which necessarily functions with the help of its concepts and categories is beset with inherent contradictions and so cannot give us reality, and that reality which is Pure Consciousness is self-luminous and therefore self-proved and is to be directly realized through Pure Reason. Neither the Absolute nor the appearances can be described. The Absolute needs no descriptions because it is self proved. All the categories of the intellect fail to grasp it in its fulness. To describe it is as useless as to throw the light of a candle over the Sun. Appearances cannot be described because they are neither real nor unreal nor both. And even description itself proceeds from finite thought and is therefore self-contradictory. All arguments as such, says Shriharṣa agreeing with Chanakīrti, are self-contradictory. To prove the validity of arguments, says Shriharṣa like Nāgārjuna and Chandrakīrti, we shall require some Pramāṇas and these Pramāṇas in order to be valid will stand in need of further Pramāṇas and so on *ad infinitum*.

Here the opponent puts a formidable objection to Shriharṣa. He says that if Shriharṣa denies the validity of all arguments as such, then he has no right to utter a word. He cannot logically do so because the argument of Shriharṣa that all arguments are invalid, being itself an argument, is invalid. It is impossible for thought to condemn itself. How can Shriharṣa logically say that the world is indefinable and that reality is also indescribable when in doing so he is himself *defining* the world and *describing* reality as indefinable and indescribable ?<sup>1</sup>

Shriharṣa, like Chandrakīrti, faces this objection bravely. He replies that he is not denying the validity of logic or intellect from the empirical

<sup>1</sup> तस्ये द्विविधतुल्योद्विग्नदासेन यथायथम् ।

निरुद्धमाने निर्लज्जेरनिर्वाच्यत्वमुच्यते ॥

Nyāyasiddhānta : p. 93.

standpoint. It is simply impossible to do so. In the phenomenal world intellect undoubtedly reigns supreme.<sup>1</sup> None can question its authority here. But intellect itself points to its own limitations and finally merges in Pure Reason. The highest philosophy is the philosophy of Silence. Reality can only be realized directly. Ultimately Pure Consciousness itself shines forth. Description is possible on the phenomenal level only. Even the distinction between the empirical and the ultimate points of view is a distinction made by intellect itself. Śrīharṣa, like Chandra-kīrti, frankly admits that the moment we say that Reality is or appearances are indescribable, we have, from the ultimate standpoint, missed the mark because even when we say that Reality or the world is indescribable we are in fact describing it and that therefore even this argument, being an argument, is unreal.<sup>2</sup> The fact is that Advaita cannot ultimately be discussed. It is only to be realized. Intellect has to be transformed into Pure Reason. How can he who has become one with the Absolute take recourse to arguments? How can he who has transcended intellect again descend to its level? Śrīharṣa, therefore, as a Vedāntin, like the Shūnyavādin, ultimately has no thesis to prove, no argument to offer, no contention to support. He is only interested in refuting the arguments of his opponent and that too from the point of view of the opponent himself. Descending on the phenomenal level, on the level of the opponent, on the level where alone arguments are possible, Śrīharṣa shows that (the opponent's) descriptions are hollow, his definitions are defective and his arguments are invalid. It is from this point of view that Śrīharṣa says that the world cannot be described either

<sup>1</sup> व्यावहारिकी प्रमाणादिसत्तामादाय विचारारम्भः ।

Khaṇḍana : p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> यो हि सर्वमनिर्वचनीयसदसत्त्वं ब्रूते स कथमनिर्वचनीयतासत्त्वव्यवस्थितो पर्यनुयज्येत, सापि हि कृत्स्नप्रपञ्चपरसर्वशब्दाभिधेयमध्यनिबिष्टैव । Ibid : pp. 32-33.



as existent or as non-existent and that therefore it is false. If the opponent accepts this argument, he is giving up his position and embracing Advaita. If, on the other hand, the opponent challenges this argument, he is challenging the validity of his own logic and is thereby accepting Advaita. In either case therefore Advaita become established. Advaita can be refuted only if the opponent is successful in defending his position and this he cannot do. Hence it is proved that the entire phenomenal world is indefinable and therefore false and that Brahman alone which is Pure Consciousness is the ultimate Reality.<sup>1</sup> Having this one Brahman-weapon with him, the Advaitin can never be defeated in the arena of philosophical fight.<sup>2</sup>

*Chitsukha* also observes that the world, when dialectically examined, is bound to be neither real nor unreal. It can be proved neither by itself nor by anything else. Therefore the only conclusion to which we are drawn is that it is superimposed on the self and is ultimately unreal. Thus the falsity of the world is a proved fact.<sup>3</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> ततः परकीयरीत्येदमुच्यते—अनिर्वचनीयत्वं विश्वस्य पर्यवस्यतीति । वस्तुतस्तु वयं सर्वप्रपञ्चसत्त्वासत्त्वव्यवस्थापनविनिवृत्ताः स्वतःसिद्धे चिदात्मनि ब्रह्मतत्त्वे केवले भरमवलम्ब्य चरितार्थाः सुखमास्महे । ये तु स्वपरिकल्पितसाधनदूषणव्यवस्थया विचारमवतार्य तत्त्वं निर्णेतुमिच्छन्ति तान् प्रतिब्रूमः—न साध्वीयं भवतां विचारव्यवस्था भवत्कल्पितव्यवस्थयैव व्याहृतत्वात् ।...तस्मात् त्वया निर्वाह्यमस्माभिश्च खण्डनीयमितीदृश्यामेव परं कथायां त्वन्निर्वाह्यनिवहि तव जयो नान्यथेति । तदेवं भेदप्रपञ्चो-  
अनिर्वचनीयः, ब्रह्मैव तु परमार्थसत् अद्वितीयमिति स्थितम् ।

Ibid : pp. 33-34.

Compare with this the arguments of Chandrakīrti on pp. 47-50 Supra.

- <sup>2</sup> एकं ब्रह्मास्त्रमादाय नान्यद् गणयतः क्वचित् ।  
आस्ते न धीरवीरस्य भङ्गः सङ्गरकेलिषु ॥ Ibid : p. 47.
- <sup>3</sup> दृश्यप्रपञ्चस्य स्वतः परतश्चासिद्धेर्दृग्गात्मन्यध्यस्ततयैव सिद्धिरिति सिद्धं मिथ्यात्वम् । Tattvapradīpikā : p. 32.

Another argument is that a whole, in order to be called existent, must exist in its parts which compose it; but it is clear that simply because it is a whole it cannot exist in the parts. And if it does not exist even in the parts, it cannot exist anywhere else. Hence it is false. Chitsukha's point is that a whole is neither a mere aggregate of its parts nor anything outside them. It is therefore false. And if the whole is false, the parts also must naturally be false. Thus the entire world is false.<sup>1</sup>

Another argument for the falsity of the world is that there can be no relation between the self-revealing Consciousness which is the ultimate knower (Dr̥k) and the object known (Dr̥shya). Sense-contact does not produce knowledge because when we perceive illusory silver in a shell there is no actual sense-contact with silver. Subject-object relation cannot be explained. Knowledge or knower cannot produce any change in the object known. Mental states like will, emotion, feeling etc. cannot change the object, for they are internal. Again, the object cannot be contained in knowledge as a *badara* fruit may be contained in a vessel. Again, the subject-object relation cannot be a vague undefined relation because in that case the subject may as well be called object and the object subject. Again, if that is regarded as an object which induces knowledge, then even the senses, light and other accessories which help the rise of knowledge would become objects. Hence the subject-object relation cannot be satisfactorily explained. So the objective world is false and the self-revealing subject alone is real and it ultimately transcends the subject-object duality. Shriharṣa also remarks that the subject-object relation is indefinable. If we reduce the subject to the object we land in crude materialism. If we reduce the object to the subject we land in crude subjectivism.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : pp. 39-40.



The subject, whether it is identical with or different from the object, cannot be related to the object. Nor can the object know the subject for it would be absurd to say that the pot knows the consciousness. Hence the subject-object relation is false.<sup>1</sup>

Chitsukha stresses that though the world is false it is not absolutely unreal like the hare's horn. The world is false only when the Absolute is realized. Until then it is true for all practical purposes. Its workable reality cannot be denied. Chitsukha admits the similarity of the Buddhistic *Samvṛti-satya* with the Vedantic *Vyavahāra-satya* and defends the former against the attacks of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. Kumārila criticizes *Samvṛti* as follows: *Samvṛti* is not true. How can it then be regarded as a kind of truth? If it is true, it cannot be *Samvṛti*; if it is false how can it have any truth? Truth is one and it cannot be divided into empirical truth and absolute truth. Chitsukha's reply is that the above distinction is made by the intellect itself. So ultimately this distinction is unreal. Truth undoubtedly is one. And it is the self-luminous Absolute. So *Samvṛti* is not true. It is ultimately false. But even an appearance, because it is an appearance of the Real, exists. It is not a hare's horn. *Samvṛti* is falsity which on account of ignorance is mistaken as truth. But as long as we are in ignorance, we cannot question *Samvṛti*. On the phenomenal plane, therefore, the workable truth of *Samvṛti* is established.<sup>2</sup>

We now pass on to the refutation of the various definitions of the Naiyāyikas and others by *Shrīharṣa* and *Chitsukha*.

<sup>1</sup> Khaṇḍana : p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> इदमप्यपास्तं यदाहुर्भट्टाचार्याः—“सम्बृतेन तु सत्यत्वं सत्यभेदः कुतो न्वयम् । सत्या चेत् सम्बृतिः केयं मृषा चेत् सत्यता कथम् ॥” इति, वस्तुतोऽसत्यस्यैव यावद् बाधं...लौकिकवैदिकव्यवहाराङ्गतया सत्यत्वेन स्वीकारात् । *Tattvapradīpikā* : pp. 42-43.

They criticize the various definitions of *right cognition* (Pramā). The definition that right cognition is the direct apprehension of the real nature of things (Tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā) is wrong, because if one guesses the right number of shells hidden in another's fist or makes an inference through fallacious data which inference may accidentally be correct (as when one infers fire on a hill from fog looking like smoke and there may accidentally be fire there), the apprehension may be right but it is not right cognition as it is not produced through valid means.

Another definition that right cognition is that which truly corresponds with its object (Yathārthānubhavaḥ pramā) is also wrong, because correspondence can neither be said to be the reality of the object itself as the real nature of an object is indeterminable, nor can it be defined as the similarity of the cognition to the object, for qualities which belong to the object do not belong to the cognition, e. g., when we are aware of two white pots, our cognition of the pots is neither 'two' nor 'white.'

Criticizing Udayana's definition of right cognition as "proper discernment" (Samyakparichchhedāḥ pramā) they remark that if the word 'Samyak' means 'entire' then the definition is useless because it is only an Omniscient being who can perceive all qualities and characteristics of a thing, and if it means the discernment of special "distinguishing features", then too the definition is faulty for even in the illusory perception of shell as silver we perceive the distinguishing features of silver in the shell. Moreover, it is impossible to perceive all distinguishing features of a thing.

The Buddhists define right cognition as "an apprehension which is not incompatible with the object known" (Avisamvādyānubhavaḥ pramā). If this definition means that right cognition is that cognition which is cognized by another succeeding cognition as being



compatible with its object, then even a wrong cognition, until it is contradicted should be deemed right. Again, the cognition of a shell as white by a person of good eyesight may be contradicted by the cognition of a person suffering from jaundice as yellow. And to say that contradiction must be by a faultless later cognition is to beg the question for faultless cognition is right cognition in defining which we are facing these difficulties. Moreover, unless right cognition is defined wrong cognition has no meaning.

The definition of right cognition as cognition having causal efficiency (Arthakriyā-kāritva) is not satisfactory because even a wrong cognition may have causal efficiency, e.g. even the wrong cognition of a rope as a snake may cause fear. Similarly Dharmakīrti's definition of right cognition as that cognition which enables one to attain the object (Artha-prāpakatva) is wrong because it cannot be determined as to which object can be attained and which cannot.

Again, right cognition cannot be defined as uncontradicted cognition (Abādhitānubhūtiḥ pramā). Even the cognition of shell as silver, according to this definition, should be right cognition since as long as the error lasts it is not contradicted. If it urged that right cognition is that cognition which cannot be contradicted at any time, then we cannot call any cognition right because it is not possible to assert with certainty that a particular cognition will never be contradicted at any time. Hence it is impossible to define right cognition.

*Pramāṇa* is generally defined as an instrument of right cognition (Pramākaraṇam pramāṇam). But when right cognition itself cannot be defined, it is impossible to define its instrument.

The categories of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* are also criticized and refuted. *Being* (Sattā) cannot be defined as that which exists for even non-being exists. Again, being

cannot be defined as that which is not a negation of anything, for being is a negation of non-being. Pure being is as impossible as pure nothing. Again, being cannot be called a universal in which all particular existent things inhere because each existent thing is a unique individual in itself. Hence being cannot be defined. Similarly non-being too cannot be defined. Both are relative and therefore unreal.

*Substance* (Dravya) cannot be defined as the support (Āshraya) of qualities. If 'support' means 'possession', then even some qualities possess other qualities, e.g. we speak of 'two colours,' 'three colours,' 'white colour,' 'black colour' etc. If 'support' means 'subsistence,' then qualities subsist in the universal 'quality.' Substance and qualities are both relative. We do not perceive any substance over and above *qualities* and yet qualities themselves cannot be called substance. Both are relative and so unreal. *Relation* too is unreal. Relation cannot relate itself to the two terms, for however well-trained a juggler may be, he cannot dance on his own shoulders.<sup>1</sup> It will require another relation to relate itself and so on *ad infinitum*. *Universals* are also unreal. They are based on convention and convenience. A universal can be neither perceived nor inferred. We see only individual cows. How can the 'universal cow' subsist in individual cows or jump over a new cow when it is born or pass away from an old cow when it dies? Again, how can the universal and the particular of that class be related? This relation can be neither that of conjunction nor that of inherence nor that of identity. And a fourth relation is impossible.

These criticisms of the Nyāya categories offered by Śrīharṣa and Chitsukha are similar to those given by Dharmakīrti, Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla.

<sup>1</sup> नहि सुशिक्षितोऽपि नटबटुः स्वकन्धमारुह्य नृत्यति ।



*Causality* also, remark Shriharṣa and Chitsukha, is not possible. A cause cannot be defined as mere antecedence (Pūrvakālabhāvitva), for then even the donkey of the potter on which he brought the clay would become the cause of the pot. And causal operation itself, being the immediate antecedence, will be the cause. And if causal operation is viewed as cause then even the cause of the cause will become the cause. Again, if this antecedence is qualified with the phrase 'invariable' meaning that the cause is invariably present when the effect is present and absent when the effect is absent, the difficulty would not be solved, for the donkey may invariably be present when the potter is making the pot and absent when the potter goes to fetch the clay. Again, if another qualification 'unconditional' (Ananyathāsiddha) is also added, then even the donkey which may be, and space etc. which are, present would have to be regarded as the cause of the pot. Then, symptoms of a disease would also be the cause of the disease because they are unconditionally and invariably present before the disease. Again, the maxim of invariable antecedence is invalidated by plurality of causes. Fire may be produced in different ways. Again if accessories (Sahakāri) are admitted, then either they are identical with the cause, or if they are different, they cannot be related to the cause. Hence the conception of causality is ultimately false.

The main aim of Shriharṣa and Chitsukha is to show that intellect is essentially discursive or relational and that therefore it is beset with inherent contradictions. The world with all its manifold phenomena is neither real nor unreal nor both. Hence it is indefinable and therefore false. The fault is with the intellect itself. All its concepts and categories are found to be unreal. It must proceed with the subject-object duality and this duality is unreal, for the subject and the object can be neither identical nor different nor both. Reality is Pure Consciousness which is the self-revealing Self.

Intellect is only a product of Avidyā. The moment Avidyā is destroyed by right knowledge of non-duality, intellect is transformed into Pure Reason. It then becomes one with Pure Consciousness. The Shruti, says, Śrīharṣa, represents the highest stage which finite intellect can reach. Here the intellect has shown its own limitations and has pointed towards Reality. When one constantly ponders over the Mahāvākya declaring the essential unity of the individual with the universal consciousness, then fortunately the finite intellect casts off the garb of discursive relativity put upon it by Avidyā and gets transformed into Pure Reason which is the self-luminous Consciousness shining forth in its pristine purity,<sup>1</sup> and thus embracing the Absolute and becoming one with it, it ever enjoys its eternal bliss.<sup>2</sup> Avidyā is bondage and its destruction which is the calm non-dual Knowledge is liberation.<sup>3</sup>

*Post-Shāṅkarites and Buddhism :—*

Most of the Post-Shāṅkarites following Śhāṅkara but probably missing his intention, condemn Shūnyavāda as utter nihilism; take Vijñānavāda in the sense of Svatantra-Vijñānavāda only; criticize the momentary Vijñānas; point out the difference between Vijñānavāda and Advaita by mentioning that while the former takes the world to be unreal because it does not fall outside of Pure Consciousness, the latter takes it to be unreal because it is Avidyā or Māyā which is a positive material stuff of ignorance which cannot be described either as

<sup>1</sup> आपाततो यदिदमद्वयवादिनीनाम्  
अद्वैतमाकलितमर्थतया श्रुतीनाम् ।

तत्त्वप्रकाशपरमार्थचिदेव भूत्वा  
निष्पीडितादहह ! निर्वहते विचारात् ॥

Khaṇḍana : p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> आत्मतत्त्वामृतसरसि निमज्ज्य रज्यति निरायासमेव मानसम् ।

Ibid : p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> अविद्यास्तमयो मोक्षः सा संसार उदाहृता ।

विद्यव चाद्वया शान्ता तदस्तमय उच्यते ॥ Brahmasiddhi : III, 106.



existent or as non-existent and which depends on the Brahman or Pure Consciouness; and exhibit almost the same spirit of animosity towards Buddhism. Thus, for example, Prakāshātmā says: He who says that Vedānta is similar to the Buddhistic Vijñānavāda talks something which befits a wicked man and his case is indeed pitiable<sup>1</sup>. Vimuktātmā advises the Buddhist to leave aside his wrong view based on mere logical quibbling and follow the path of the wise otherwise deluding the dull he will himself be deluded and destroyed<sup>2</sup>. Vidyāranya calls him as one who is expert in mere logical hair-splitting (Shuṣkatarkapaṭu) and who is erroneously confused and deluded (Bhrānta) and who is correctly criticised by the venerable Śhaṅkara.<sup>3</sup> Sadānanda calls him 'dull-headed' (Buddhi-Shūnya)<sup>4</sup> and Gangādharendra calls him a 'fool' (Jaḍa).<sup>5</sup>

But years after Śhaṅkara when the struggle died down and when Buddhism was defeated and finally ousted from India, people began to think dispassionately about Buddhism. Thus we find some Post-Shaṅkarites expressing doubt whether Shūnyavāda is really nihilism and whether Vijñānavāda is really subjectivism which advocates the existence of momentary ideas only. And in the same school of Advaita Vedānta we find an eminent person like Shriharṣa who tries to revive the long-lost spirit of Gauḍapāda and who correctly represents Shūnyavāda and frankly and openly admits the enormous similarities between Shūnyavāda and Advaita.

*Maṇḍana*, like Śhaṅkara, criticizes the three schools of Buddhism. The *Bāhyārthavādins*, he says, land in crude materialism. For them even the ephemeral

<sup>1</sup> Pañchapādikā-Vivaraṇa : p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Iṣṭasiddhi : p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Pañchadashī : II, 30.

<sup>4</sup> Pratyaktattvachintāmaṇi : I, 68.

<sup>5</sup> Svārājya-siddhi : I, 26.

objects, being regarded as real, should be permanent and even the illusory objects like shell-silver should be real. If objects are real, there is no place for illusion and error ; if objects are unreal there is no place for the phenomenal world—is the dilemma they have to face. The *Vijnānamātravādins* land in crude subjectivism. By no stretch of imagination can the unchanging Consciousness appear as changing objects. If the objects are real they cannot be made by the individual mind ; if the objects are unreal then, being like the sky-flower, they cannot be regarded even as an external appearance of the mind. The *Shunyavādins* land in nihilism. In their system, Avidyā, being like the sky-flower, has no practical bearing and fails to explain the phenomenal world which is said to be a mere non-entity.<sup>1</sup> We have already noticed Maṇḍana's criticism of the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda doctrine that difference alone is real and that unity is an appearance.

*Padmapāda* also criticizes the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda view under the name of Vijñānavāda. He refutes the view that reality is efficient causation and that a permanent entity can never be efficient and therefore real. He rejoins that, on the other hand, a momentary entity can never be a cause. The meaningless, chaotic and momentary Vijñānas must be brought under a unity, like loose threads made into a rope, and must be given some meaning by the permanent Self. Vedānta has proved the existence of such Pure Self through immediate experience and through reasoning. The doctrine of Mahāyāna, therefore, cannot be supported by such filmy arguments as are advanced in its support by its followers.<sup>2</sup>

*Vāchaspati* distinguishing Advaita from Vijñānavāda remarks that according to Vijñānavāda the external world is unreal because it is mind-made, while according to Advaita it is unreal because it is indescribable.

<sup>1</sup> Brahmasiddhi : p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Pañchapādikā : p. 28.



Objects exist outside and independent of the mind. Only they are indescribable and irrational. They are neither real nor unreal nor both. Hence they are false<sup>1</sup>.

*Sarvajñātma Muni* points out that though both Buddhism and Vedānta admit Avidyā, the fundamental difference between them is that for Vedānta the ultimate reality is Brahman which is Pure Consciousness and this is not admitted by Buddhism.

Criticising Svatantra-Vijñānavāda under the name of Vijñānavāda, *Vimuktātmā*, like Śaṅkara, remarks that though objects known are inseparable from the knower, yet it does not mean that they are identical because while the objects change, the knower always remains the same. Even the expression 'invariable association' (*sahopalambha*) implies the idea that the two are different. Moreover, if the external objects do not exist, the Vijñānavādin has no right to talk that cognitions appear 'as if they are external'<sup>2</sup>. The theory of momentariness heightens the absurdity of this subjectivism. If cognitions are momentary, they cannot be called self-revealing. The Vijñānavādin therefore must admit one eternal self-revealing Consciousness<sup>3</sup>.

Again, a momentary thing can never become a cause. If both the preceding and the succeeding things are momentary there should be no distinction between them. Moreover, how can the Buddhist who is himself momentary perceive two moments as causally related? He should therefore stop such babbling and accept the

<sup>1</sup> न हि ब्रह्मवादिनो नीलाद्याकारां वित्तिमभ्युपगच्छन्ति, किं तु अनिर्वचनीयं नीलादीति । *Bhāmatī* : II, 2, 28.

<sup>2</sup> अतस्तयोर्भेदो भात्येव तवापि, अन्यथा सहोक्त्ययोगात् ।

*Iṣṭasiddhi* : p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> अथ जन्मादय इष्यन्ते बुद्धीनामस्वयंप्रभाः सर्वाः बुद्ध्यः स्युः । ततश्चैकोऽभिन्नोऽजन्तः कूटस्थनित्य आत्माऽभ्युपेयः, अन्यथा जगत आन्वयप्रसङ्गात् ।  
*Ibid* : p. 115.

doctrine of the wise, otherwise deluding the dull he will himself be doomed.<sup>1</sup>

Vimuktātmā, like Śhaṅkara, takes the word 'shūnya' in the sense of mere negation (asat). If the Mādhyamika, he says, persists in advocating his theory of mere nothing, let him believe that only his doctrine is a mere nothing<sup>2</sup>. To the Vedāntins, on the other hand, 'asat' means māyā which is neither sat nor asat. But Vimuktātmā is kind enough to add that if the Shūnyavādin means by his 'asat' not a mere nothing but this māyā, then his position is the same as that of the Vedāntin<sup>3</sup>. And it is needless to add that the Shūnyavādin means this māyā by his 'shūnya'.

Śrīharṣa has done some justice to Shūnyavāda. He points out that according to the Shūnyavādin, shūnya is not mere negation. That negation is necessarily rooted in affirmation is a truism accepted by Shūnyavāda. Even the asat is. It has a *svarūpa*<sup>4</sup>. Shūnya means 'unreal because indescribable as real or unreal'. The equation is as follows: *sadasadvilakṣaṇa* = *anirva-chaṇīya*. The whole world is shūnya because it is relative. It is only *saṃvṛti*, not *paramārtha*. This Mādhyamika view of the world with all its experiences, Śrīharṣa boldly confesses, cannot be refuted by the Vedāntin because *so far as the world is concerned*, the Mādhyamika view is exactly the same as that of the Vedāntin himself<sup>5</sup>. Śrīharṣa frankly admits the similarity of Shūnyavāda with Advaita Vedānta by pointing out that both regard the world to be indescribable either

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : pp. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup> अतो यदि भ्रान्तिरिष्येत, असत्ख्यातिरेव सा इष्यताम् ।

Ibid : p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> असन् मायां इच्छसि चेत्, अस्तु समानगतिता । Ibid : p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> असतोऽपि तदेव स्वरूपं, तस्य नियतस्वरूपस्यैव नियतविशेषणस्यै-वासत्त्वात् । Khaṇḍana : p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> माध्यमिकादिवाग्व्यवहाराणां स्वरूपापलापो न शक्यते । Ibid.



as real or as unreal or as both, that both agree in condemning the intellect as essentially relational or discursive and its categories as fraught with inherent contradictions, and that therefore the criticisms of all definitions as such given by both Shūnyavāda and Vedānta are valid against all views of all systems.<sup>1</sup>

Shrīharṣa then points out the fundamental difference between Shūnyavāda and Vedānta. Shūnyavāda, he says, regards everything *including even Consciousness* to be unreal being indescribable. Buddha has declared in the Laṅkāvatāra (II, 175): All things which can be known by the intellect have no reality of their own. They are therefore said to be indescribable and unreal. But Vedānta makes an *exception* in favour of Consciousness (Vijñāna) which it regards self-luminous (svaprakāsha). The Brahmavādins say that everything *except Consciousness* is indescribable as real or unreal or both and is therefore false.<sup>2</sup> So the Vedāntins find it difficult to accept Shūnyavāda as they are dissatisfied with the view that everything, including even Consciousness, is unreal. Consciousness is also "indescribable" *in the sense* that all categories of intellect fail to grasp it fully. But most assuredly it is not unreal, for it is self-luminous and self-proved. Consciousness which is the same thing as the Pure Self is self-revealing and is the only reality.<sup>3</sup> One may doubt everything else but one cannot doubt one's own Self for the very

<sup>1</sup> तथाहि यदि शून्यवादानिर्वचनीयपक्षयोराश्रयणम् तदा तावदमूषां (खण्डनयुक्तीनाम्) निर्वाचैव सार्वपथीयता । Ibid : p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> एवं च सति सौगतब्रह्मवादिनोरयं विशेषः यदादिमः सर्वमेवानिर्वचनीयं वर्णयति, तदुक्तं भगवता लङ्कावतारे "बुद्ध्या विविच्यमानानां स्वभावो नावधार्यते । अतो निरभिलाष्यास्ते निःस्वभावाश्च देशिताः ॥" इति, विज्ञानव्यतिरिक्तं पुनरिदं विश्वं सदसद्भ्यां विलक्षणं ब्रह्मवादिनः संगिरन्ते । Ibid : p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> अपरे पुनः चेतसोऽपि शून्यताङ्गीकारे मनःप्रत्ययमनासादयन्तः सर्वमिदमसदेव विश्वमित्यभिधातुं सहसैवानुत्सहमाना मन्यन्ते विज्ञानं तावत् स्वप्रकाशं स्वत एव सिद्धस्वरूपम् । Ibid : p. 21.

idea of doubt pre-supposes the Self. Everything else may be denied but not the Self for it is necessarily pre-supposed even by its denial. Everything else may require proof but not the Self for the very notion of proof rests upon it. Hence the Self-revealing Self-luminous Consciousness stands self-proved.<sup>1</sup>

We may remark here that Shriharṣa is wrong in saying that Shūnyavāda regards even Consciousness as unreal. Our exposition of Shūnyavāda has proved that Consciousness is the only Reality (tattva) recognized by Shūnyavāda, though the idea is not so fully developed as it is done in Advaita.

Shriharṣa recognizes the genius of Dharmakīrti by saying that one should be very careful in criticizing Dharmakīrti because his arguments appear to be difficult to refute.<sup>2</sup> Shriharṣa points out that the Vijñānavādins, unlike Shūnyavādins, made an exception in favour of Consciousness and regarded it to be self-luminous. But their sin was to treat this Consciousness as momentary. A momentary vijñāna cannot be called self-luminous. It is itself an object to the Self which knows it. The momentary vijñāna must be unified by the Self. Consciousness therefore must be admitted to be permanent. Only Vedānta which Shriharṣa calls *Svapraśāśa-Vijñānavāda*<sup>3</sup> or the doctrine which upholds the reality of the Self-luminous Consciousness has done this.

<sup>1</sup> न खलु विज्ञाने सति जिज्ञासोरपि कस्यचित् जानामि न वेति संशयः, न जानामीति वा विपर्ययः, व्यतिरेकप्रमा वा । यदि हि विज्ञानं परतः सिध्येत् तदाज्ञवस्था स्यात् । Ibid : p. 21.

स्वात्मसिद्धमेव चिद्रूपम् । Ibid : p. 26.

अस्माभिस्तु स्वसंवेदनबलादेव स्वतःसिद्धस्वरूपं विज्ञानमास्थीयते ।

Ibid : p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> दुरावाध इव चायं धर्मकीर्तेः पन्थाः इत्यवहितेन भाव्यमिह

Ibid : p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : p. 21 and 31.



*Chitsukha* too admits the similarity between the Buddhistic *saṃvṛti* and the Vedāntic *vyavahāra* and defends the former against the attacks of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

Vidyāraṇya takes the word *shūnya* in the sense of mere negation and condemns the *Shūnyavādins* as nihilists who dwell in illusion and who are expert in mere logical hair-splitting and who are therefore rightly criticized by Shāṅkara.<sup>1</sup> He points out that even negation presupposes the *sākṣin*.<sup>2</sup> The never-flickering light of Pure Consciousness is self-proved and can never be denied. It cannot be momentary or changing. It is permanent. It neither rises nor sets.<sup>3</sup> This Pure Self is directly realized when the limits of finite thought are transcended. Silence is the highest experience. This experience is not *shūnya*, for all notions of the intellect including the notion of *shūnya* are transcended here.<sup>4</sup> Vidyāraṇya adds that if the *Shūnyavādin* means by 'shūnya' this Reality which appears as the indescribable manifold world of name and form, then may he live long for he is embracing Advaita.<sup>5</sup> And we know that *Shūnyavāda* really means by *shūnya* this Reality which appears as name and form and which transcends them all for it is essentially non-dual.<sup>6</sup>

Vidyāraṇya also criticizes the *Svatantra-Vijñānavādins* under the name of *Vijñānavādins* and distinguishes the eternal Self from the momentary ideas.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pañchadashī* : II, 30.

<sup>2</sup> शून्यस्यापि हि शून्यत्वं तत् साक्षिणि सतीक्ष्यते ।

*Br-Vārtika-Sāra* : III, 4, 73.

<sup>3</sup> नोदेति नास्तमेत्येका सम्बिदेषा स्वयम्प्रभा । *Pañchadashī* : I, 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* : II, 44.

<sup>5</sup> शून्यस्य नामरूपे च तथा चेज् जीव्यतां चिरम् । *Ibid* : II, 34.

<sup>6</sup> नामरूपमेव शून्यता शून्यतैव नामरूपम् । ...सर्वमेतदद्वयमद्वैधीकारम् ।

*Shatasāhasrikā* : p. 559 and 1676.

<sup>7</sup> *Br-Vārtika-Sāra* : IV, 3, 123-142.

Sadānanda also says that if *shūnya* means not pure nothing but the Reality which is beyond intellect, we have no quarrel with the *Shūnyavādin* for he has accepted Vedānta.<sup>1</sup> But if *shūnya* means mere negation then he dare not steal even a glance at us.<sup>2</sup> Sadānanda, distinguishing Advaita from *Vijñānavāda*, observes that whereas for *Vijñānavāda* the world exists inside Consciousness and is therefore unreal, for Vedānta, on the other hand, it is *māyā* or something which can be described neither as real nor as unreal nor as both and is therefore false. This indescribability of the world which baffles intellect is a merit for Vedānta, but not for *Vijñānavāda*.<sup>3</sup>

Gaṅgādharendra condemns *Vijñānavāda* as doomed on account of its momentary ideas. The foolish *Vijñānavādin*, he says, by refuting the self-proved Self wants to commit suicide.<sup>4</sup>

We thus see that the Post-Shāṅkariies say that if *shūnya* means pure negation, *Shūnyavāda* is a self-condemned nihilism; but if *shūnya* means *māyā* which necessarily points to the self-luminous Reality, they have no quarrel with *Shūnyavāda* for *Shūnyavāda* is then merged into Vedānta. They also say that *Vijñānavāda*, instead of maintaining that the world is unreal because it does not exist outside of thought, should maintain that it is unreal because it is a positive material stuff of Ignorance called *māyā* which is neither existent nor non-existent nor both and is therefore indefinable.

<sup>1</sup> शून्यं नाम किञ्चित् तत्त्वमस्ति न वा ? आद्ये नाममात्रे विवादः वेदान्तमतप्रवेशात् । Advaitabrahmasiddhi : p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Pratyaktattvachintāmaṇi : X, 34.

<sup>3</sup> नहि विज्ञानवादिना अस्माभिरिव जगदनिर्वचनीयमुच्यते येन तस्येत्वं विचारासहत्वं भूषणं स्यात्...वेदान्तसिद्धान्तस्य तु अयं सीगतमताद् भेदः—न ज्ञानाकारोऽर्थः किन्तु बाह्यानिर्वचनीयत्वान् मायामयः । Advaitabrahmasiddhi : p. 100 and 104.

<sup>4</sup> किमिति जड ! भवानात्मघाते प्रवृत्तः । Svārājyasiddhi : I, 25-26.



Again, they do not distinguish between Svatantra-Vijñānavāda and Vijñānavāda. They practically omit Vijñānavāda and take Svatantra-Vijñājavāda as real Vijñānavāda. They therefore find it easy to condemn the momentary vijñānas. They themselves maintain that vijñāna is self-luminous, but they say that this vijñāna is the pure permanent Consciousness which is the same as the self-revealing Self transcending all categories of the intellect and also transcending the trinity of knowledge, knower and known. They accept the criticism of all other systems by the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins, but they point out that the criticisms may be rightly levelled against the Buddhists' own momentary vijñāna. If the Buddhists maintain the permanent self-luminous Consciousness, they have no quarrel with the Buddhists for then the Buddhists are embracing Vedānta. They agree with Shūnyavādins in maintaining that the world is shūnya or anirvachanīya. They agree with Vijñānavādins in maintaining that Reality is Pure Self-luminous Consciousness which is permanent. Thus by supplementing Shūnyavāda with Vijñānavāda and Vijñānavāda with Shūnyavāda they have their own Advaita Vedānta.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

Buddhism and Vedānta should not be viewed as two opposed systems but only as different stages in the development of the same central thought which starts with the Upaniṣads, finds its indirect support in Buddha, its elaboration in Mahāyāna Buddhism and its open revival in Gauḍapāda, which reaches its zenith in Śaṅkara and culminates in the Poṣṭ-Śaṅkarites.

So far as the similarities between Buddhism and Vedānta are concerned, they are so many and so strong that by no stretch of imagination can they be denied or explained otherwise. So far as the differences are concerned, they are few and mostly they are not vital. Most of them rest on the horrible misunderstanding of Buddhism. We have tried to refute them and to clear away those misunderstandings upon which they depend. However, there are some differences which are real and vital. But they are very very few and have been pointed out by us.

*Buddha and Vedānta*:—The fundamental philosophical doctrine which Buddha borrowed from the Upaniṣads is that intellect, being essentially relational, involves itself in insoluble antinomies and in order to be one with Reality, it has to get itself transformed into Pure Reason (Bodhi or Prajñā). Intellect, as a matter of fact, is Reason or Reality itself; it appears to be intellect only on account of Ignorance. Reality is not to be philosophized; it is to be directly realized in practice. The Unborn, Uncreated and Imperishable Reality which is throughout implied by all changing phenomena as their background and which, at the same time, transcends all phenomena, all dualism (ubho



ante) of the intellect, as well as the trinity of knower, known and knowledge, is Pure Consciousness and is to be directly realised by the wise. People are surrounded by the darkness of ignorance; they have to look for the lamp of knowledge. And Buddha bequeathes the Lamp of Dharma to them—the Lamp which he borrowed from the Upaniṣads<sup>1</sup>.

*Ashvaghoṣa and Vedānta*: Ashvaghoṣa realised that after Buddha's Nirvāṇa, Buddha's teachings were perverted by the Hinayānists who reduced mind to fleeting ideas and matter to fleeting sensation, who placed Buddha in place of God and who denied the ultimate existence of mind and matter. Ashvaghoṣa challenged the Hinayānists and refuted their views. He knew well that Buddha's real philosophy was based on the Upaniṣads and he tried to revive it. The Tathatā of Ashvaghoṣa also called as Bhūta-tathatā, Tathāgata-garbha, Dharmakāya, Dharmadhātu, Ālayavijñāna, Bodhi or Prajñā is in fact the same as the Ātman or the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. Relativity (pratītyasamutpāda) is the realm of the intellect which is a product of Avidyā. The Absolute is untouched by it. "It is wrong to take the work of Ignorance as ultimate and to forget the foundation on which it stands", says Ashvaghoṣa.<sup>2</sup> The Tathatā of Ashvaghoṣa which is Bodhi or Vijñāna or Pure Consciousness together with its two aspects—the Absolute 'Suchness' and the conditional 'suchness' remind us of the Ātman or the Brahman of the Upaniṣads with its two aspects—the higher and the lower or the nirguṇa or the para and the saṁguṇa or the apara. The Tathatā and the Brahman, both are jñānaghana or Pure Consciousness and anirvachanīya or indes-

<sup>1</sup> "The Śākyan mission was out 'not to destroy, but to fulfil', to enlarge and enhance the accepted faith-in-God of their day, not by asseverating, but by making it more vital. It was Brāhmins who became the leading disciples."—Mrs. Rhys Davids: *A Manual of Buddhism*, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*: Suzuki, p. 124.

cribable in the sense that intellect fails to grasp them fully. The 'Ignorance' of Ashvaghōṣa is the avidyā of the Upaniṣads. The phenomenal and the absolute standpoints of Ashvaghōṣa are the vyāvahārika and the pāramārthika standpoints of the Upaniṣads. Ashvaghōṣa uses those very similes commonly used in the Upaniṣads—the similes of waves and water, of pots and clay, of ornaments and gold etc. It is unmistakably clear that the Upaniṣads exercised a great influence on Ashvaghōṣa. Indeed, avoiding all contradictions of Hīnayāna, Ashvaghōṣa has rightly interpreted Buddha in the light of the Upaniṣads and has placed Buddhism on a firm basis.

*Shūnyavāda and Vedānta*:—Our exposition of Shūnyavāda will at once make it clear how similar it is to Vedānta. We have clearly proved that shūnya does not mean a mere negation nor does Shūnyavāda mean nihilism. Shūnya is used in a double sense. It means Māyā as well as Brahman. Empirically it means that all dharmas or world-experiences, subjective as well as objective, are svabhāva-shūnya or devoid of ultimate reality. They are pratītya-samutpanna or merely relative. They are ultimately unreal because they can be called neither existent nor non-existent nor both. They are indescribable or māyā. But the mere fact that they are appearances implies that there must be a Reality of which they are mere appearances. This Reality or tattva is prapañcha-shūnya or beyond all plurality. It is the Brahman. It is Bodhi or Pure Consciousness. It too is indescribable or chatuskoṭivinirmukta because all categories of the intellect fail to grasp it fully. Samvṛti and paramārtha correspond to vyavahāra and paramārtha of Vedānta. Chandrakīrti divides samvṛti into mithyā-samvṛti and tathya-samvṛti to match parikalpita and paratantra of Vijñānavāda. Mithyā-samvṛti, tathya-samvṛti and paramārtha will now correspond to prati-bhāsa, vyavahāra and paramārtha of Vedānta. We know that the two standpoints, empirical and absolute,



were present in the Upaniṣads which sometimes use the word 'samvṛti' also.<sup>1</sup>

The Mahāyāna-sūtras, Nāgārjuna and his followers condemn all phenomena to be like illusion, mirage, son of a barren woman, sky-flower etc. etc. which expressions suggest that they are something absolutely unreal. But this is not their intention. They use such expressions only to emphasize the ultimate unreality of phenomena. Their empirical reality is, as we have seen, emphatically maintained. We know that Gauḍapāda and even Śhaṅkara use such expressions. They are therefore not condemned to be absolutely unreal.

We have noticed the enormous similarities between Shūnyavādins on the one hand and Gauḍapāda, Śhaṅkara and Post-Śhaṅkarites on the other. Their dialectical arguments are essentially similar. Their method is also essentially the same. Intellect or logic has got only negative value for them. It has to be transformed into Pure Reason so that it may embrace the Absolute. They are interested in pointing out to their opponents that even according to the canons of logic of the opponents the arguments of the opponents can be proved to be false. Ultimate Reality is Silence. It has to be realized directly. It cannot be discussed. If the opponent accepts it, he is accepting their position. If, on the other hand, he challenges it he is challenging the validity of his own logic. Intellect is essentially discursive or relational. It must work with its concepts and categories. So it gives only the relative world which must be taken to be empirically real. But ultimately it is false because it is neither existent nor non-existent nor both.

We have seen that Gauḍapāda frankly approves of the No-origination theory preached by Shūnyavāda. His Kārikās bear striking resemblances with the Kārikās

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Bṛhadāraṇyaka, II, 5, 18.

of Nāgārjuna. Śhaṅkara knows very well that Shūnyavāda cannot be criticised and so he simply dismisses it by taking the word shūnya in its popular sense of negation and dubbing Shūnyavāda as a self-condemned nihilism. Śhaṅkara says that the Shūnyavādin has no right to condemn this world as unreal unless he takes recourse to some higher reality (anyat-tattva). We have seen that Shūnyavāda does take recourse to this higher reality. Nāgārjuna uses the very word 'tattva' and defines it as that which is to be directly realized, which is calm and blissful, where all plurality is merged, where all cries of intellect are satisfied, and which is the non-dual Absolute.<sup>1</sup> The Post-Śhaṅkarites, following Śhaṅkara, either condemn Shūnyavāda as nihilism or say that if shūnya means the indescribable māyā, as it really does mean, they have no quarrel with Shūnyavāda. Śhrīharṣa frankly admits that Shūnyavāda cannot be fully criticized because it is similar to Vedānta. The only difference which he points out between Shūnyavāda and Vedānta is that while Shūnyavāda declares even Consciousness to be unreal, Vedānta makes an exception in its favour. Śhrīharṣa quotes a verse from the Laṅkāvatāra (II, 175): 'All things which can be known by the intellect have no reality of their own. These are therefore said to be indescribable and unreal.'<sup>2</sup> But we know that the Laṅkāvatāra itself repeatedly makes an exception in favour of Consciousness. Shūnyavāda condemns only the individual self to be unreal and not Pure Consciousness. Nāgārjuna's definition of Reality clearly shows that such definition can apply only to Pure Consciousness. Nāgārjuna himself in his Ratnāvalī (I, 45 and 60) identifies Reality with Pure Consciousness or Bodhi or Jñāna. Āryadeva also identifies Reality with the Pure Self or the Chitta.<sup>3</sup> Śhāntideva in much-inspired verses praises the only Reality, the Bodhi-Chitta or the True Self

<sup>1</sup> Mādhyamika-Kārikā, XVIII, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Khaṇḍana, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Chittavishuddhi-prakarṇa, 27, 28, 74.



which is Pure Consciousness.<sup>1</sup> If the Bodhi of Nāgārjuna, the Chitta of Āryadeva, or the Bodhi-Chitta of Shāntideva are not the self-luminous Self which is Pure Consciousness, what else, on earth, can they be?

The only difference between Shūnyavāda and Vedānta, therefore, is the difference of emphasis only. This difference is of a double nature. Firstly, while Shūnyavāda is more keen to emphasize the ultimate unreality of all phenomena, Śāṅkara and his followers are more keen to emphasize the empirical reality of all phenomena; and secondly while Shūnyavāda is less keen to develop the conception of ultimate Reality, Vedānta is more keen to develop this conception almost to perfection. And this is not unnatural if we remember that Shūnyavāda represents the earlier stage while Vedānta represents the later stage of the development of the same thought.

*Vijñānavāda and Vedānta*:—We have proved that Vijñānavāda is neither subjective idealism nor does it advocate the reality of momentary ideas only. It is absolute idealism. The theory of momentariness is applied to phenomena only. Reality is declared to be Absolute Consciousness which is the permanent background of all changing phenomena.

This doctrine clearly has its essential roots in the Upaniṣadic philosophy. The parikalpita, paratantra, and pariniṣpanna correspond to the pratibhāsa, vyavahāra and paramārtha of Vedānta. Vijñānavāda and Vedānta both agree in maintaining that Reality is Absolute Consciousness which is the permanent background of all changing phenomena and which ultimately transcends the trinity of knowledge, knower and known. Everything, the subject as well as the object, is its appearance. The Tathāgata-garbha or the Ālaya-Vijñāna of the Laṅkāvatāra, the Vishuddhātman or

<sup>1</sup> Bodhicharyāvatāra, I, 8, 10 etc.

the Mahātman or the Paramātman or the Dharmadhātu of Asaṅga, the Vijñaptimātra or the Dharmakāya of Vasubandhu, and the Ātman or the Brahman of the Vedānta are essentially the same pure and permanent self-luminous Consciousness. The Vijñaptimātra of Vasubandhu corresponds to the Ātman or the Brahman of Vedānta, his Ālayavijñāna to the Vedāntic Īshvara, his manovijñāna to the Vedāntic jīva, his viṣaya-vijñapti to the Vedāntic jagat, and his pariṇāma to the Vedāntic vivarta. When the Laṅkāvatāra tries to distinguish its Tathāgatagarbha or Ālayavijñāna from the non-Buddhiistic Ātman, the essential difference which it points out is that while the former transcends all categories of intellect (nirvikalpa) and is to be directly realized through Pure Reason (nirābhāsa-prajñā-gochara), the latter clings to the category of affirmation.<sup>1</sup> But this distinction is superficial and false. The Ātman as much transcends all the categories of intellect (nirguṇa and nirvikalpa), and is as much to be directly realized through Pure Reason (Jñāna) as is the Tathāgatagarbha. The Ātman does not cling to the category of affirmation. No category can adequately describe it. When it is said that Ātman is Pure Existence what is meant is that though the Ātman cannot be grasped by the category of existence, yet when we describe it from the phenomenal point of view, we must avoid nihilism and say that the Ātman exists by itself and in its own right because it is self-luminous Consciousness.

We have seen that even Śaṅkara admits that Gauḍapāda accepts the arguments of Vijñānavāda to prove that the world is ultimately unreal as it cannot exist independently and outside of Consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Gauḍapāda is profoundly under the influence of Vijñānavāda. We have clearly proved this. The fact stands as it is and cannot be challenged. We have also

<sup>1</sup> Laṅkāvatāra, pp. 77-79.

<sup>2</sup> Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya, IV, 28.



seen that real Vijñānavāda, like Shūnyavāda, is only avoided by Shaṅkara. The criticism of so-called "Vijñānavāda" by Shaṅkara is really the criticism of the "Svatantra-Vijñānavāda" school. Shaṅkara's criticism of real Vijñānavāda—and this criticism applies to some extent to Gaudapāda also—loses much of its force because, firstly, Vijñānavāda and Gaudapāda do not deny the objectivity of the external world as they maintain that the objects appear as objects to the knowing subject, and secondly because they hold self-luminous consciousness to be the permanent background of all phenomena. They distinguish between the parikalpita and the paratantra, and when they place the dream state and the waking state almost on a par, they do so only to emphasize the ultimate unreality of the world.

The only difference, therefore, between Vijñānavāda, on the one hand and Shaṅkara and his followers on the other, is that the latter emphasize the empirical reality of the world and emphatically distinguish the dream state from the waking state, and that they prove the ultimate unreality of the world not by saying that it does not exist outside of thought but by saying, like Shūnyavāda, that it is false because it can be described neither as existent nor as non-existent nor as both. This view, as we have seen, was already presented by Gaudapāda. The advance made by Shaṅkara and his followers on Shūnyavāda and Gaudapāda is that Avidyā or Māyā is regarded as a positive material stuff of Ignorance which baffles all description.

#### *Svatantra-Vijñānavāda and Vedānta :*

The only fundamental and most vital difference between this school and Vijñānavāda is that this school degrades the permanent Consciousness of Vijñānavāda to momentary vijñānas only. Reality, according to it is momentary vijñāna only. It is the unique momentary point-instant of Consciousness. Under the name of

Vijñānavāda, Śaṅkara really criticizes this school and we have noticed that Śaṅkara's criticism of it is perfectly valid. Post-Śaṅkarites also, following Śaṅkara, criticize this school under the name of Vijñānavāda and mostly repeat Śaṅkara's objections. A momentary idea can be neither self-luminous nor can it ideate itself. The reality of permanent self-luminous Self which is Pure Consciousness must be admitted.

We have pointed out the enormous similarities between the arguments for the refutation of other systems given by Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalāshīla on the one hand, and the arguments for the refutation of those very systems advanced by Śaṅkara and Post-Śaṅkarites, on the other hand. Vedānta does not reject the criticism of other systems by the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins so far as that criticism does not militate against its own doctrine. Vedānta criticizes only their momentary vijñānas and their view that external world is unreal because it falls within consciousness as this view well smacks of subjectivism when consciousness is reduced to momentary ideas. Vedānta points out that the arguments which the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins advance against permanent consciousness are more applicable to their own momentary consciousness. To take an example, if bondage and liberation are impossible when consciousness is permanent they are more so when consciousness is momentary. Vedānta accepts that Consciousness is Self-luminous and that it ultimately transcends the subject-object duality and the trinity of knowledge, knower and known and all the categories of the intellect. But from the empirical standpoint, stresses Vedānta, it is far better to describe Reality as Permanent and Pure Consciousness which is at once Pure Existence and Pure Bliss than to call it momentary for whatever is momentary is miserable and self-contradictory. The momentary vijñāna can be neither self-luminous nor can it ideate itself. It requires the Pure Self which is Pure Consciousness to know it.



Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla confess that the view of the followers of the Upaniṣads (i.e. of Gauḍapāda and others) is very much similar to their own view, and that it contains very little error, its only fault is that it declares consciousness to be permanent.<sup>1</sup> Vedānta may well rejoin: The view of the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins is very much similar to Vedānta; it contains very little error, its only fault is that it declares consciousness to be momentary.<sup>2</sup>

It is generally said that Nairātmyavāda or the No-Soul theory and Kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda or the theory of Momentariness are the two main and vital theories which distinguish Buddhism from Vedānta. Let us now briefly summarize our views in regard to these two theories.

*Nairātmyavāda*:—We maintain that by this doctrine Buddhism does not deny the existence of the true Ātman, the Pure Self which is Pure Consciousness and which is the only reality. Buddhism understands the word 'Ātman' in the sense of the individual ego-complex or the Jīvātman which is a product of beginningless Avidyā, Māyā or Vāsanā and which is associated with the Antaḥkarana or the Buddhi. Thus Buddha and the Mahāyāniṣts have found it easy to repudiate this Ātman (Jīva), while at the same time accepting its empirical reality. It is in fact "the self of straw" which they have erected simply to demolish it afterwards. The real self is untouched by their criticism. They have, in one sense or the other, either implicitly or explicitly, always accepted its reality. It is called, not generally Ātman, but Bodhi, Prajñā, Chitta, Bodhi-chitta, Tattva, Vijñāna, Chittamātra, Vijñānamātra, Vijñaptimātra, Tathatā, Tathāgatagarbha, Dharmadhātu, Dharma-kāya or Buddhakāya. Ashvaghoṣa calls it Ātman also.<sup>3</sup> Asaṅga

<sup>1</sup> तेषामल्पापराधं तु दर्शनं नित्यतोक्तिः । Tattva-Saṅgraha: K. 330.

<sup>2</sup> तेषामल्पापराधं तु दर्शनं क्षणिकोक्तिः ।

<sup>3</sup> Saundarananda: XIV. 52.

calls it Shuddhātman, Mahātman and Paramātman.<sup>1</sup> Even Shāntarakṣita calls it Vishuddhātman.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is a great irony of fate that the Buddhists and the Vedāntins fought against each other. Nairātmya-vāda has been horribly misunderstood both by the Buddhists and by the Vedāntins. And Buddha and the Buddhists themselves were greatly responsible for creating this misunderstanding.

The Upaniṣads have repeatedly used the word Ātman as a synonym of Reality. Buddha admitted this Reality and termed it Bodhi or Prajñā. But instead of frankly identifying his Bodhi with the Ātman, Buddha degraded Ātman to the level of the Jīva and easily condemned it as unreal. There is a famous saying of Yājñavalkya that the husband, the wife, the children, the worldly objects and all things are loved, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the Ātman. Perhaps Buddha wrongly took the Ātman in the sense of the 'I' and the 'mine' which is the cause of attachment and bondage. He therefore condemned it as an unreal thing imagined only by the dull.<sup>3</sup> Love for the Ātman is like the blind passion of a foolish lover for the most beautiful damsel (janapada-kalyāṇī), he is represented to say in the Dīghanikāya, about whose existence, residence, colour, size and age that lover knows nothing.

The Hīnayānists denied the self. Nāgasena tells Milinda that the so-called self is nothing apart from the fleeting ideas. The Mahāyāna-Sūtras, the Shūnya-vādins, the Vijñānavādins, and the Svatantra-Vijñānavādins all take the word 'Ātman' in the sense of the notion of the 'I' and the vain-glory of the 'Mine' and condemn it to be ultimately unreal. Dharma-nairātmya

<sup>1</sup> Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra, XIV, 37; IX, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Tattvasaṅgraha, 3535.

<sup>3</sup> केवलो परिपूरो बालधम्मो । Majjhimanikāya : I, 1, 2.



means that all objective existences are unreal. Nāgārjuna declares that the self is neither identical nor non-different from the five skandhas.<sup>1</sup> When the 'I' and the 'Mine' cease, the cycle of birth and death comes to a standstill.<sup>2</sup> Āryadeva says that in the beginning, evil should be avoided; in the middle, Ātman should be viewed as unreal; and in the end, everything phenomenal should be taken to be unreal.<sup>3</sup> Chandrakīrti declares Ātman to be the cause of all sufferings and demerits and says that a Yogī should deny its ultimate reality.<sup>4</sup> Shāntideva says that just as when one goes on taking off the layers of a plaintain trunk or an onion nothing will remain, similarly if one goes on examining the self, ultimately it will be found to be nothing.<sup>5</sup> Asaṅga says that all suffering are due to the ego and the ego itself is due to beginningless ignorance. There is no self as a substance nor even as a subject.<sup>6</sup> Vasubandhu says that Consciousness transcends the duality of the subject and the object, both of which are ultimately unreal.<sup>7</sup> Dharmakīrti regards the self as the root-cause of attachment and misery. As long as one is attached to the Ātman, so long will one revolve in the cycle of birth and death.<sup>8</sup> Shāntarakṣita clearly states that Consciousness itself when associated with the notion of the ego is called Ātman. It has only empirical reality. Ultimately it denotes nothing.<sup>9</sup> Thus in Buddhism, right from Buddha himself to Shāntarakṣita, the word Ātman is generally taken in the sense of the empirical ego and its ultimate reality is denied. It is variously called as Ātman, Pudgala, Sattva or Satkāya.

<sup>1</sup> Mādhyamika-Kārikās : X, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : XVIII, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Chatuḥshataka : Verse, 190.

<sup>4</sup> Mādhyamakāvatāra as quoted in Mādhyamika-Vṛtti : p. 340.

<sup>5</sup> Bodhicharyāvatāra : IX, 75.

<sup>6</sup> Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra : XI, 47 ; XVIII, 77, 92-103.

<sup>7</sup> Viṃśatikā : 9 and 10.

<sup>8</sup> Pramāṇavārtika : II, 201, 213, 219.

<sup>9</sup> Tattva-Saṅgraha : 204.

But it is very important to remember that the Pure Self which is Pure Consciousness is always admitted by Buddhism to be the ultimate Reality. Buddha himself identified Reality with Bodhi or Prajñā. The Tathatā of Ashvaghōṣa is Ālayavijñāna or Absolute Consciousness. The Mahāyāna-sūtras identify Reality with Consciousness and call it Prapañcha-Shūnya, Atarkya, Sarvavāgviśayātīta, Advaya, Achintya, Anakṣara, Anabhilāpya, Atyanta-vishuddha and Pratyāt-mavedya. It is significant to note that though Reality is not generally called Ātman, it is sometimes described as Brahman. Thus we find in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā<sup>1</sup> that all things are such that they neither come in nor go out, they are neither pure nor impure, they are free from attachment and detachment, they are undefiled, unattached and uncontaminated because they are of the very nature of *Brahman*. The same Sūtra tells us that for supreme enlightenment one dwells in Brahman.<sup>2</sup> The Shatasāhasrikā<sup>3</sup> and the Lalitavistara<sup>4</sup> describe Reality as Full of Bliss in the beginning, in the middle and in the end, One, Full, Pure and the Abode of *Brahman*. The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka<sup>5</sup> says that one who truly follows the teaching of the Buddha ever dwells in the *Brahman*, the Absolute, the Pure, the Calm, the Blissful and the Undefiled. Asaṅga<sup>6</sup> also says that by becoming one with Pure Reason, one realizes the last, the fourth meditation, and then one ever dwells in the blissful Brahman.

Nāgārjuna's definition of Reality as the non-dual Absolute, Calm and Blissful and beyond all plurality applies to Pure Consciousness alone. He also openly identified Reality with Pure Consciousness and says

<sup>1</sup> p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> p. 1460.

<sup>4</sup> p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra : VII, 2-3.



that the empirical ego must embrace Pure Consciousness in order to be transformed into Reality.<sup>1</sup> Āryadeva says that the Jewel of Self is absolutely pure and self-luminous and appears to be impure only on account of ignorance just as a white crystal appears coloured on account of a coloured thing placed near it.<sup>2</sup> Shāntideva says that the True Self which is Pure Consciousness or Bodhichitta can transform an impure mortal into a pure Buddha.<sup>3</sup> The Laṅkāvatāra identifies Reality with Tathāgatagarbha or Ālayavijñāna. Asaṅga says that the Chitta or the Pure Self is by its very nature self-luminous (Prakṛtiprabhāsvara) and all impurities are adventitious.<sup>4</sup> He calls it Shuddhātman, Mahātman and Paramātman.<sup>5</sup> Vasubandhu says that ultimate Reality is Vijñapti-mātrā or Absolute Consciousness which is the permanent background of all changing phenomena. Dharmakīrti says that Reality is Consciousness which is beyond all words, names and concepts.<sup>6</sup> Shāntarakṣita says that Consciousness is self-luminous and free from all impositions. It is one without a second. True knowledge consists in the realization of the Pure Self (Vishuddhātma-darshana).<sup>7</sup>

Thus we see that Buddhism generally means by Ātman what Vedānta means by Jīvātman or Buddhi or Chitta or Antahkāraṇa. And on the other hand Buddhism generally means by Chitta or Vijñāna or Vijñapti or Bodhi or Prajñā what Vedānta means by Ātman or Brahman or Samvit or Chit. Thus the Vedāntic Ātman generally becomes the Buddhist Chitta, and the Vedāntic Chitta generally becomes the

<sup>1</sup> Ratnāvalī : I, 45, 60

<sup>2</sup> Chittavishuddhiprakaraṇa, 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Bodhicharyāvatāra, I, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra, XIII, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 37-38.

<sup>6</sup> Pramāṇavārtikā, I, 88, 93.

<sup>7</sup> Tattvasaṅgraha, 3535.

Buddhiistic Ātman. Had Buddha refrained from committing an error of commission in degrading the Upaniṣadic Ātman to the level of the empirical ego and also an error of omission in not identifying his Bodhi or Prajñā with the Upaniṣadic Ātman or Brahman, the age-old battle regarding the Nairātmyavāda fought without any reasonable ground by the Buddhists and the Vedāntins on the soil of Indian Philosophy would have been surely avoided.

*Kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda* :—The theory of Momentariness loses all its force and significance in Buddha, Ashva-ghoṣa, Shūnyavāda and Vijñānavāda since it is applied to phenomena only. It presents a real problem only in Hīnayāna and in the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda school.

The Upaniṣads recognized the misery and momentariness in this world. Nachiketā kicked away wealth, land, women, sons, grandsons, music, dance and long life by saying that these things simply wear away the senses. And Maitreyi, unlured by wealth, told Yājñavalkya : 'What shall I do with that by which I cannot become immortal?' Buddha also was deeply moved by the misery of old age, illness and death and he declared all world-objects to be momentary. The Hīnayānists in their zeal over-emphasized the dark side of the picture and unreservedly declared everything, without any exception, to be merely momentary. But these people who boasted that 'All things are momentary' (*Kṣaṇikāḥ sarvasaṃskārāḥ*) is the roaring of the Sugata-lion (*Saugata-simhanāda*) forgot that it was the Sugata himself who proclaimed : The fact that things in this world appear to be born, to be changing, to be made, and to be perishable, logically implies that there is a reality which is Unborn, Immortal, Uncreated and Imperishable.<sup>1</sup> They also forgot that it was the Sugata himself who called his Enlightenment, "the Middle

<sup>1</sup> यस्मा च सो भिक्खवे अस्मि अजातं अमतं अकतं असंखतं तस्मा जातस्स मतस्स कतस्स संखतस्स निस्सरणं पजाय । Udāna, 73 Sutta.



Path" which transcended both the "ends" of intellect including momentariness and permanence.

Ashavaghoṣa realised this. He re-affirmed that everything phenomenal is momentary, fleeting and deceptive. But he proclaimed Tathatā to be beyond all categories, to be neither momentary nor permanent, though phenomenally it must be called permanent. Shūnyavāda did the same thing. The 'Madhyamamārga' is a path which at once transcends both the extremes as well as the middle.<sup>1</sup> The Laṅkāvatāra also declares its Ālayavijñāna to be beyond all categories. Asaṅga emphasizes the momentariness of all phenomena, but maintains that Reality is the permanent background of all changing phenomena. Vasubandhu's Vijñaptimātra is openly declared to be permanent, non-dual and blissful. Sthiramati says that whatever is momentary is misery and whatever is permanent is bliss.<sup>2</sup> The theory of Momentariness is applied to phenomena only.

In the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda, the theory is revived and is applied to Reality also. Reality is declared to be a unique momentary point-instant of Consciousness. The Criticism of this school by Chandrakīrti and Śaṅkara is fully justified.

*A brief historical survey of Buddhism and Vedānta:—*  
The Upaniṣads are the fountainhead of all Indian Philosophy. Buddha did not preach anything absolutely new. He was disgusted with the orthodox Vedic ritual, with the sacrifices in which animals were butchered, with the rigidity of the caste system and with the supremacy of the Brāhmandom. Buddha himself speaks in very high and respectable terms about a true Brāhmaṇa whom he regards an ideal saint who has done away with all sins and ignorance and who shines with the light of pure wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samādhirājasūtra, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Triṃśikā-Bhāṣya, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Suttanipāta : 35.

In the doctrine of Buddha there was nothing which could seriously militate against the Upaniṣadic philosophy. It was in fact based upon it. But after the death of the Buddha the Hīnayānists misunderstood his teachings. Proclaiming that the No-soul theory and the theory of Universal Momentariness were the corner-stone of Buddhism, they reduced mind to fleeting ideas and matter to fleeting sensations.

This brought a vehement protest from Ashvaghōṣa and from the Mahāyānā-Sūtras. The Sarvāstivādin and others were dubbed as Hīnayānists. They were either Shrāvakas or layman or at best Pratyekabuddhas or men of inferior intellect, who could not understand the real teaching of the Buddha which was meant for the Mahāyānists Bodhisattvas. Ashvaghōṣa interpreted Buddha in the light of the Upaniṣads and declared Reality to be Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss—all in one.

It is to the credit of Nāgārjuna who flourished in the second century that he for the first time synthesized the scattered doctrines of the Mahāyānā-Sūtras. His work was ably carried on by his disciple Āryadeva. Shūnyavāda brought Buddhism closer to Vedānta.

In the fourth century flourished Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. They agreed with Shūnyavāda in declaring Reality to be devoid of all plurality. They also agreed with it in declaring all phenomena, subjective as well as objective, to be mere appearances. But they developed the view that Reality is Pure Consciousness—the view which was indicated but not fully developed by Shūnyavāda. Vijñānavāda thus brought Buddhism still closer to Vedānta.

In the fifth century flourished Diṇnāga. At that time Brāhmanism was undergoing a rapid revival and the rivalry between Buddhism and Brāhmanism was increasing. Diṇnāga saw clearly that Vasubandhu had



merged Buddhism in Vedānta. He did not like it. In his mistaken zeal to distinguish Buddhism from Vedānta, he turned to Hīnayāna for his inspiration and fell back on the theory of Momentariness. Vasubandhu was so revered and was so famous that he had the unique distinction of being called "the second Buddha". Dīnnāga therefore did not think it proper to challenge the authority of Vasubandhu openly. Saying that so far as ultimate reality was concerned he agreed with Vasubandhu, he busied himself with the revival of Buddhist logic. He wanted to dilute the Absolute Idealism of Vasubandhu with the Critical Realism of the Sautrāntikas. He ruthlessly criticized the Naiyāyikas whom he called "bunglers in logic" and founded the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda school of Buddhist logic. There was no harm in this. Dīnnāga was perfectly free to do this provided he did not touch ultimate reality. His greatest error lay in declaring Ultimate Reality to be an absolutely dissimilar particular 'thing-in-itself' which was a unique momentary point-instant of Consciousness. He agreed with Vasubandhu in maintaining that Reality was Consciousness. But his sin lay in declaring this Consciousness also to be momentary. Thus Dīnnāga, on the one hand paid lip-homage to Vasubandhu and on the other, really undermined the very root of Vasubandhu's philosophy. Dīnnāga therefore is the first Buddhist philosopher who is really responsible for the downfall of Buddhism, at least of Buddhist philosophy. There were also other social, economic, political and religious causes. But the new interpretation of the theory of Momentariness and its application even to the Ultimate Reality created a philosophical chasm between Buddhism and Vedānta. Thus Dīnnāga was the first man who sowed the poisonous seed which grew into a plant in Dharmakīrti and bore fruits in Śāntarakṣita, and led to the doom of Buddhist philosophy in India. Had Dīnnāga tried to develop or even to explain the philosophy of Vasubandhu this tragedy would have been certainly averted.

In the sixth century came Gauḍapāda who is the first known systematic exponent of Advaita Vedānta. He openly based his philosophy on the Upaniṣads. The influence of Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu on Gauḍapāda is clear. The phrases and terms used by him were not the monopoly of any particular school. They were the heritage of the common language. Gauḍapāda is charged of being a crypto-Buddhist. If this charge means that Gauḍapāda was really a Buddhist who pretended as a Vedāntin, it is foolish. If on the other hand it means that Gauḍapāda was influenced by Buddhism, it is correct. Those who dub Gauḍapāda as a crypto-Buddhist tend to suggest that he had a definite leaning towards Buddhism and only outwardly professed to be a Vedāntin. Their error lies in the mistaken belief that Buddhism and Vedānta are two absolutely opposed systems. Our entire treatment of Buddhism and Vedānta gives a death-blow to such wrong notion. It is a great irony of fate that Buddhism and Vedānta, though they are the offsprings of the same mother, the Upaniṣadic Philosophy, though they are fed by the same ideology, though they are nurtured by the same terminology, though they are brought up in the same phraseology, and though they grow up in the same philosophical atmosphere, yet the Buddhist should regard the Vedāntin as a pagan (Tīrthika) and the Vedāntin should regard the Buddhist as an alien (Bāhya). The Hīnāyāna and the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda are philosophically responsible for this grave misunderstanding. Fortunately the Hīnāyānists were corrected by the Mahāyānists, but unfortunately no great Buddhist was born to correct the error of Svatantra-Vijñānavāda. If one is really fond of this 'Prachchhanna'—terminology, then instead of dubbing Gauḍapāda as a Prachchhanna-Bauddha, it will be far more appropriate for one to dub the Shūnyavādins and the Vijñānavādins as Prachchhanna-Vedāntins.

We have seen that Gauḍapāda represents the best that is in Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. While the



Buddhists either kept indifferent or outwardly professed to be, if not exactly the opponents of Vedānta, at least the followers of a faith different from that of Vedānta, it was the mission of Gauḍapāda to convince people including the Buddhists that his philosophy and also the Buddhist philosophy so far as it agreed with his own, were directly rooted in the Upaniṣads. Gauḍapāda's impartial spirit is highly admirable. His attitude towards Buddha and Buddhists is one of love and even of respect. He extended his hand of friendship towards the Buddhists, but unfortunately the Buddhists did not respond.

Bhāvaviveka who flourished in the sixth century and was a junior contemporary of Gauḍapāda, in his *Tarkajvālā* quotes approvingly from Gauḍapāda. Bhāvaviveka is the first Buddhist to recognize the impartial spirit of Gauḍapāda. But he too, instead of directing his energy towards the bridging over of the chasm created by Diñnāga, drew his inspiration from Diñnāga and in his zeal of founding a new school, founded the Svatantra-Mādhyaṃika school which wanted to support Shūnyavāda by means of independent logical arguments. Against this school, Buddhapaṇita founded the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyaṃika school which rejected all independent arguments.

The seventh century gave rise to the Shūnyavādinś like Chandrakīrti and Śāntideva, to the Svatantra-Vijñānavādin Dharmakīrti and to the Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila. At that time Brāhmaṇa religion, culture and philosophy were undergoing a vigorous revival and the antagonism between Buddhism and Brahmanism had much increased. Buddhistic Tantra degenerating into Vāma-mārga was increasingly prevalent. Due to the changed economic, social and political conditions, Buddhism was losing the patronage of the wealthy persons. Under the supervision of perverted monkdom the Buddhist monasteries were rapidly becoming nurseries of corruption. These

conditions badly required a Buddhist scholar who could have bridged over the gulf between Buddhism and Vedānta. But unfortunately none rose to the occasion.

Chandrakīrti bitterly criticized the Svatantra-Mādhyaṃika School of Bhāvaviveka and the Svatantra-Vijñānavāda School of Dīñnāga. But he too failed to imbibe the spirit of Gauḍapāda. Though there were enormous similarities between Gauḍapāda and Nāgārjuna, Chandrakīrti completely ignored Gauḍapāda. Thus he did positively nothing to bridge the chasm between Buddhism and Vedānta.

Shāntideva felt that it was not wise to keep silent on or leave undeveloped the conception of Reality. He therefore fervently extolled the Bodhi-chitta. But he too failed to remark openly that Buddhism and Vedānta were the off-springs of the same philosophy.

The need of the hour was some staunch Vijñānavādin who could revive and develop the philosophy of Vasubandhu and who could boldly proclaim that it was based on the Upaniṣads. But instead we had Dharmakīrti, the Svatantra-Vijñānavādin who glorified the sin of Dīñnāga and harped on the separatistic tunes. The Naiyāyika and the Mīmāṃsaka were the two major opponents of Buddhism in that time. Dharmakīrti ruthlessly criticized both. To do that was no crime. In fact Śaṅkara and Sureshvara also bitterly criticized Mīmāṃsā. But nothing happened to them. Dharmakīrti ought to have accepted the philosophy of Vasubandhu and openly declared that it was based on the Upaniṣads. Then he could have well busied himself with his logic and with the criticism of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā and other schools. A genius as he was, he ought to have corrected Dīñnāga's mistake by ousting the theory of momentariness from the realm of Reality and restricting its application to phenomena only. Had he



done that Buddhism would not have met the fate it did. But what he actually did was to widen the gulf between Buddhism and Vedānta created by Diñnāga and thus to hasten the doom of Buddhism in India.

Dharmakīrti's attack on Mīmāṃsā was so damaging that it provoked his contemporary Kumārila to write his voluminous *Shloka-Vārtika* to refute Buddhism and defend Mīmāṃsā. In fact Kumārila is the first man who dealt effective blows after blows on Buddhism.

The attacks of the Naiyāyikas and of Kumārila, in their turn, gave rise in the eighth century to Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla who extensively refuted them and criticized all other schools prevalent in their time. Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla also, like Diñnāga and Dharmakīrti, paid lip-homage to Vasubandhu by saying that so far as the ultimate reality was concerned, they were following in the footsteps of Vasubandhu,<sup>1</sup> but they too really undermined Vasubandhu's philosophy and repeated the Himālayan blunder of Diñnāga. They admit that there are many similarities between Buddhism and Vedānta and that the only error of Vedānta is that it declares Consciousness to be permanent.<sup>2</sup> Vedānta accepts the criticism of other schools by them so far as it does not violate Vedāntic standpoint. Vedānta points out that a momentary vijñāna cannot be called self-luminous or real. Consciousness must be called, at least empirically, permanent for whatever is momentary is misery and whatever is permanent is bliss. Dialecticians of the first rank as Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla undoubtedly were, they could have saved the situation from taking a worse turn.

Perhaps the atmosphere was so much full of hatred and animosity that Shāntarakṣita and Kamalashīla

<sup>1</sup> *Tattva-saṁgraha*, 2084.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* : 330.

could not even think of bridging the gulf. Shān-  
 rakṣita, of course, remarks that learned Brāhmaṇas  
 have great respect for Buddha,<sup>1</sup> that a true Brāhmaṇa  
 is he who has removed all sins (Vāhitapāpatvād  
 Brāhmaṇāḥ) and that such Brāhmaṇas are to be found  
 only in the religion of the Enlightened Sage.<sup>2</sup> But  
 such things receded into the background when instead  
 of real arguments dogmatic arguments and repartees  
 often came into the forefront. For example, the  
 Mīmāṃsaka said: Because Buddha taught his doctrine  
 to fools and Shūdras, therefore it is clear that his teach-  
 ing was false like a counterfeit coin.<sup>3</sup> In fact, just as  
 a herbal medicine which has been touched by the teeth  
 of a mongoose removes, even when playfully used, all  
 poison from a limb bitten by a snake, similarly any  
 argument, whether Vedic or secular, emanating from  
 the mouth of a follower of the Veda removes all  
 poisonous misconceptions of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> And the  
 Buddhist retorted: Long time has passed and women  
 are fickle by nature. So it is very difficult to ascertain  
 the purity of the Brāhmaṇa race.<sup>5</sup> The feeble and the  
 foolish Brāhmaṇa, at the very sight of the poisonous  
 eyes of a Buddhist-snake, cannot even breathe much less  
 can he think of setting it aside. Even a reasonable  
 argument from the mouth of a follower of the Veda  
 looks ugly like a necklace or a string of beads placed  
 on the feet.<sup>6</sup> Now, the result of all this was that

<sup>1</sup> Ibid : 3512.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid : 3589.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid : 3227.

<sup>4</sup> यथा नकुलदन्ताग्रस्पृष्टा या काचिदोषधिः ।  
 सर्वं संपविष्यं हन्ति श्रीडुम्भिरपि योजिता ॥  
 वेदवादिमुखस्थैव युक्तिर्लोकिक्वैदिकी ।  
 या काचिदपि शाक्यादिसर्पज्ञानविषापहा ॥ Ibid : 3155-6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid : 3579.

<sup>6</sup> दुम्भिरपरिहृ दृष्टोऽपि स्वल्पशक्तिर्द्विजो जडः ।  
 उच्छ्वासमपि नो कर्तुं शक्नोति किमु बाधितुम् ॥  
 वेदवादिमुखस्था तु युक्तिः साध्यपि दुम्भगा ।  
 कण्ठिका चरणस्थेव जघन्याश्रयसंस्थिते ॥ Ibid : 3376-7.



Buddhism could not resist the onslaught of Brahmanism and was ousted from the land of its birth. Shāntarakṣita himself was forced to retire to Tibet where he called his disciple Kamalashīla too. And with them virtually ended the Buddhistic philosophy in India, though a Buddhist scholar here and a Buddhist scholar there continued even upto a much later date.

Then came the great Shaṅkara in that very eighth century just after Shāntarakṣita. He gave the final death-blow to Buddhistic philosophy. We have seen that Shaṅkara was greatly influenced by Buddhism. But the vital error of the Svatantra-vijñānavādins together with other things which degraded Buddhism changed the love and respect towards Buddhism shown by Gauḍapāda into the outward animosity and hatred exhibited by Shaṅkara. He has nothing but bitter and strong remarks for Buddhism. We have seen that Shaṅkara does not criticize Shūnyavāda and real Vijñānavāda. Svatantra-Vijñānavāda is the only school of Mahāyāna criticized and rightly refuted by Shaṅkara. Why did Shaṅkara not refute Shūnyavāda and Vijñānavāda? There are two hypotheses. It is said that on account of the mutual animosity, hatred and distrust, the Buddhists kept their texts secret from the non-Buddhists. It is also said that Kumārila in order to know the essentials of Buddhism first became a Buddhist and studied in a Buddhist monastery for years. It may be that the Shūnyavāda and the Vijñānavāda texts were not available to Shaṅkara. But there is another hypothesis which seems to be more probable when we remember how faithfully and correctly Shaṅkara has presented Sarvāstivāda and Svatantra-Vijñānavāda. It may be that Shaṅkara fully knew how similar Shūnyavāda and Vijñānavāda were to his own Vedānta and that the differences were more or less a matter of emphasis only. He also knew that the best in them was already preserved in Gauḍapāda's and also in his own philosophy. He also knew that

their fundamental teachings could not be refuted because he himself accepted them. Śaṅkara's aim was to oust Buddhism. So he just dismissed Shūnyavāda as nihilism by taking the word Shūnya in its popular sense of negation and avoided Vijñānavāda by taking it in the sense of Svatantra-Vijñānavāda only.

Most of the Post-Śaṅkarites, following Śaṅkara, do the same thing and repeat his arguments. But when Buddhism was ousted and the struggle died down, people began to think dispassionately about Buddhism. Thus we find some post-Śaṅkarites remarking that if Shūnyavāda is not nihilism they have no quarrel with it for then it is merged in Vedānta, and if Vijñānavāda is not subjectivism advocating the reality of momentary vijñānas but is absolute idealism, they have no quarrel with it for then it also embraces Vedānta. We find in the same school an eminent person like Śrīharṣa openly admitting the similarities between Buddhism and Vedānta.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the present time Buddhism is generally misunderstood. We have tried to clear the misunderstandings about it and have pointed out that throughout it is rooted in Vedānta. Buddhism and Vedānta should now be viewed, not as two opposed systems, but only as different stages in the development of the same Upaniṣadic thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Khaṇḍana, p. 21, 31, 61.





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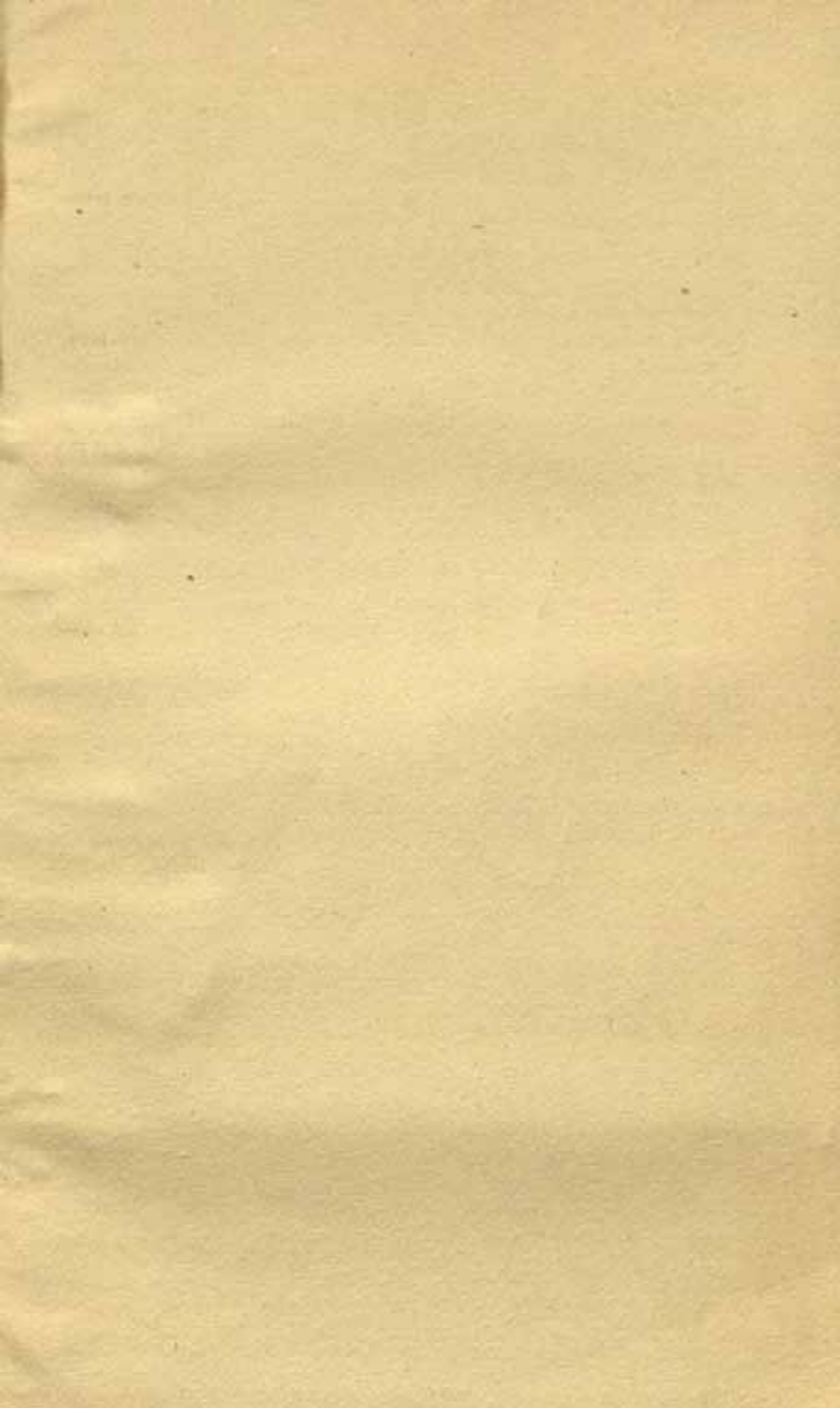
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